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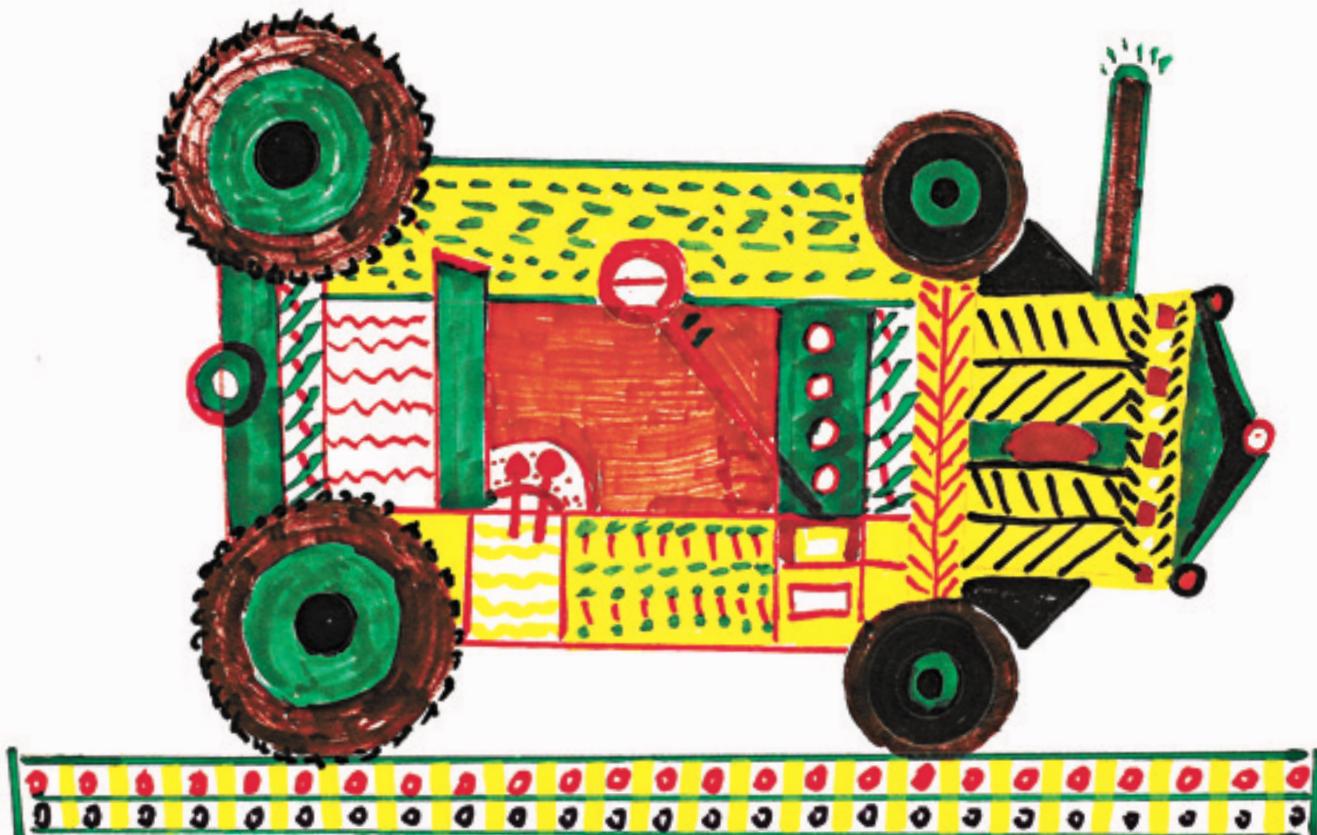


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Finding art's lost minds

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Guo Haiping thought he was crazy when he set out to be an artist. But in the art world, madness is the next step after genius. He entered the Nanjing Zutangshan Mental Hospital on World Mental Health Day 2006 to search out and cultivate minds that took that extra step. The astounding work produced by the patients he befriended was the subject of the 2007 book Demented Art. This September, Guo is planning a new exhibition in Nanjing to show 'normal' people what he learned: it might be everyone on the outside who is 'mentally ill.'

Photo provided by Guo Haiping

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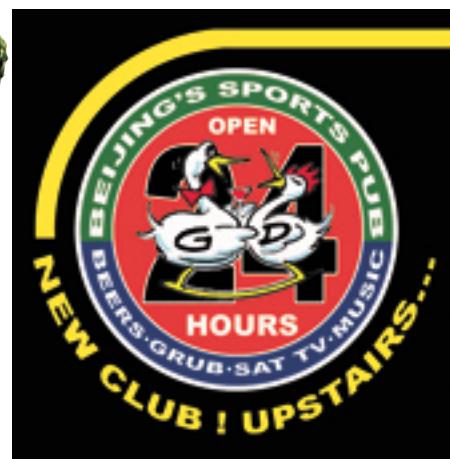
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rift between
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Gov limits derivative trades by state-owned enterprises

The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission tightened rules Tuesday on the conditions under which central state-owned enterprises could use financial derivatives.

In its statement, the commission said the low risk awareness of a few such enterprises presented a serious danger to the safety of state assets.

State-owned enterprises should use derivatives "cautiously" and "strictly" follow hedging rules. No speculative trading is permitted, the statement said.

Several central enterprises have reported huge derivative losses since last year.

Three carriers – Air China, Shanghai Airlines and China

Eastern – reported 13 billion yuan of losses on their books by the end of January on aviation fuel hedging contracts.

All derivative contracts must be approved by the enterprises' boards and trading must be overseen by a specific department. Companies must inform the commission of derivative trades, the regulator said.

It also said companies with high leverage, huge losses or impaired cash flow are forbidden to trade derivatives.

A few companies that did not understand the risks and complexity of derivatives and associated leverage speculated and lost critical assets. This posed "severe danger" to the companies' operations and to state asset security,

the commission said.

It urged all central state-owned enterprises to overhaul their derivative activities and said they should choose financial products which are relevant to their main business, report under accounting rules and are not subject to complicated pricing models.

(Xinhua)

Firefighters get new tools



The Municipal Fire Bureau conducted a drill to rescue people trapped in a high-rise Tuesday. It was the first practice since the bureau introduced a new chute escape system. During the drill, the assigned "victim" slid down within 20 seconds from the sixth floor. The bureau said women and children often fear heights, but they are willing to enter the chute. The bureau has installed the equipment on 20 fire engines.

(By Venus Lee) Photo by Tom Wang

New subsidy helps orphans move out on their own

By Jin Zhu

The municipal government is turning its attention to an aging orphan population with a new subsidy of 150,000 yuan for each that will be available from next month, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs said.

Orphans over age 18 who can live and work independently will be eligible for the allowance as long as they are registered with a municipal children's welfare institution, Guo Yue, a bureau official, said.

"Instead of directly handing out an allowance to orphans, the government will appropriate the money to specific districts and counties which are responsible for making arrangements and for financing the orphans' daily needs, such as getting a home or landing a job," she said.

How to help adult orphans to reenter society is a global problem.

"Some orphans, after studying at a technical school or college, can earn a living on their own. But many cannot survive without government support," Wang said.

Xueqi, president of Beijing Children's Welfare Institution, said.

Some 100 adult orphans who can work and support themselves still live in Beijing's welfare institutions: the oldest of them is more than 50 years old.

Guo said the policy will start with a pilot program in well-to-do districts and counties available to orphans who choose to try it.

"As many as half of all adult orphans will benefit from the policy by the end of this year," she said.

The government also plans to build two new welfare institutions this year. Construction will begin this year, the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Civil Affairs said.

"Beijing has only two municipal welfare institutions for children and 500 beds, which limits how many orphans it can care for. More than 800 orphans are left to families in the countryside," Wang said.

Those orphans will be transferred to the new building after construction, she said.

City examines plan to add 'green lungs'

By Zhao Hongyi

The municipal government is considering adding three "green lungs" to the city according to the bureau of landscape and forestry.

Dong Ruilong, director-general of the municipal bureau, told local media the first "lung" was the 1,135-hectare Olympic Green and Forest Park along the city's historical north-south central axis.

The greening move was first proposed earlier this year by Liu Xiucheng, deputy director-general of the bureau.

"(Green lungs) are very important in a big city like Beijing, especially for its long-term development," said Liu, a top botanist and landscape gardener. His proposal also urged the government to officially recognize the plum blossom in addition to the peony as China's national flower.

Liu's proposal to congress last month called for one lung in the west to be developed over the old Capital Iron & Steel factory, one in the east by the Wenyu River and another in the south at Nanyuan.

Each of the new sites would be as large as the Olympic Green.

"Considering the size of Beijing, the green lungs should be no smaller than Central Park in Manhattan," Liu said.

He did not elaborate on which trees, plants or flowers he expects the "lung" sites to use. However, he did say he hopes the parks can become large, urban natural reserves what will, together with the 7,333 hectares of forests that line Beijing's highways and rivers, form the city's green framework.

The city will also renovate and improve green areas in 100 residential communities in the downtown this year by planting trees and new grass.

Dong invited individuals and companies to donate and support the forestry effort to better protect the climate and environment.

China has 885 national and provincial reserves that cover 185,400 square meters of land: almost 2 percent of China's landmass. The 187 national reserves cover 90,000 square meters.

Burned girl receives foreign skin grafts

By Zhang Dongya

Six-year old Wang Dan from Shi'en, Hubei Province, is now wearing foreign skin.

The girl was the recipient of skin grafts provided by the Euro Skin Bank last Saturday to repair severe burns that had destroyed 70 percent of her skin.

The burns were sustained while warming herself by a fire at home.

After preliminary emergency dermoplasty at her local hospital she was sent to Wuhan Third Hospital, the biggest burn center in the region.

Her father offered to donate his scalp and skin from his back, but it was not enough to repair the damage. The hospital turned to the Netherlands-based non-governmental skin bank for help.

The bank sent 3,000 square centimeters of skin to the hospital for free last Friday. All the skin, as thin as paper, was conserved in bottles of glycerin.

The girl received her first 200 square centimeters of skin last weekend and another 320 Tuesday. Yang Rengang, the doctor in charge of Wang's treatment, said the hospital would continue to perform the transplants in stages over the next several days.

"There is always a risk of rejection after surgery, but whether the donor is European or Asian does not matter much. Transplanted skin only works to protect the wound – the patient still has to grow her own skin," Yang said.

He said the father was not an option, since living donors are rarely candidates, and never when from the areas he wished to donate.



The skin, as thin as paper, will protect the wound while Wang grows her own skin.

IC Photo

Most donor skin comes from cadavers who elected to donate their organs and tissues.

Yang said skin is in short supply throughout the country, and hospitals sometimes use animal skin as a substitute. "Most people don't realize that donating their skin can benefit others," Yang said, noting how the process lags behind organ donation.

There are several small skin banks run by hospitals throughout the country, but nothing to rival the nationalized skin bank in the

Netherlands. Some hospitals like Beijing 304, which has the biggest burn department in the country, have a large private bank.

"A national skin bank is necessary if we want to meet treatment demands. Banks vary from hospital to hospital. Beijing 304 Hospital, for example, uses liquid nitrogen to store the skin, but our hospital can only afford a common freezer," Yang said.

The Chutian Metropolis Daily, based in Wuhan, said the city is short 200,000 square centime-

ters of skin each year. The Wuhan Red Cross Society said it plans to start a national skin bank to solve the problem.

The Euro Skin Bank was established in 1976 as the National Skin Bank of the Dutch Burns Foundation. It previously donated skin to Japan and Korea.

Wuhan Third Hospital has a cooperation contract with the bank. Under the contract, the two institutions will conduct research on new burn treatments.

Quake ruins closed to cars for construction

By Zhao Hongyi

Beichuan, the small county hit hardest by last year's deadly quake in Sichuan Province, halted tourism to its ruined downtown and nearby sites last weekend. The local government said trips to the ruins could be too dangerous as the rainy season approaches.

More than 10,000 tourists have flocked to the ruins each week since January. Many went to pay their respects to the dead on trips organized by travel agencies. However, the government closed all three roads leading to the downtown on March 20.

One plan under discussion would turn the Beichuan area into a museum. To preserve the site until a final decision is made, Governor Jing Dazhong decided to close vehicular access to the site after a March 17 meeting.

Tourists may still visit by bicycle or on foot.

At the same meeting, Jing called for expansion of Beichuan's existing main road into an expressway, and for museum planners to speed up their selection of sites for parking and museums around the ruins.

"The expressway construction and expected rain may be a risk to tourists. There could be landslides, mudflows or a collapse of the ruins," Jing said at the meeting.

Online rumors say the ruins will reopen before May 12 this year, but the local government denied these, stating the roads will not reopen until the expressway is complete. Netizens complained that the local government is trying to monopolize the region's tourism market by exploiting the dead.

"This is not a question of ethics," a local government spokesman, who declined to give his name, said. "We welcome visitors from all over the country to remember the dead – but now it's unsafe."

Sichuan-based *Tianfu Morning Post* reported Beichuan is working on the 2.3-billion-yuan National Earthquake Ruins Museum, which will open in four years. The museum will cover the ruins of the demolished Beichuan High School, the downtown and the quake lakes formed when the upstream Jian River broke.

Beichuan County is populated mainly by ethnic Qiang people. It is also famous for its natural environment and landscape.

Horsemanship to start Beijing - London ride



Sitting astride a horse with his hair worn long, clad in a dark green cloak and a mud-stained pair of riding boots, Li Jing was regarded an oddity by many.

the route of Mongol conqueror Genghis Khan.

"I've loved horses and nature since I was little, and I always dreamed of riding horses and traveling long distances," Li said.

The equestrian was born in Wuhan Province and moved to Russia in 1990, where he married, had a child and taught Chinese as he planned for his trip home.

Li crossed 9,000 kilometers on his trip, wearing out 10 horses in the process. His 19-month trip cost him 150,000 yuan, some of which came from his savings and the rest of which came from loans from friends.

The trek was not easy.

"The terrain makes it very difficult to travel by horse. There are no vast Siberian prairies for the horse to eat at. Besides, traveling by horse isn't part of Chinese culture, and most people have no idea what you are doing once you make it into China," Li said,

noting that many people along

By Han Manman

After finishing a year and a half's solo horseback ride from Russia to China, Li Jing is preparing to saddle up for an even longer trip to London next month. This time he will be joined by British and Chinese companions.

the route called him "mad."

Things looked up when local media began to carry his story, and when their reports landed on the desk of the China Equestrian Association.

"They took care of me and my horse during my stay, and we shared stories. I spent my happiest days on my journey with them," Li said.

Following his trek from Russia, Li was invited by Megan Lewis, a Welsh equestrian, to join her expedition from London to Beijing, scheduled to start April 19.

Her ride will raise money for charity and commemorate the move of the Olympic Games from Beijing to London for 2012. Chinese and British equestrian organizations are helping to arrange the trip.

Li said he is unsure whether the new trip is possible. "Anything can happen on such a long ride. It will depend on our luck," Li said.

The poster features a central graphic of several tennis players in various stages of a serve or swing, rendered in a glowing blue color against a dark background. A network of glowing blue lines and dots forms a grid-like pattern around the players, suggesting a digital or futuristic theme. Below this, a photograph of a large, modern tennis stadium filled with spectators is visible. The stadium has a distinctive curved roof and bright lights. At the top left, the China Open logo is displayed with the text "CHINA OPEN" and "中国网球公开赛". In the top right corner, there are logos for "Sony Ericsson WTA TOUR" and "ATP WORLD TOUR 500". The main title "星耀中网" (Starry China Open) is written in large, stylized, glowing blue characters, followed by the subtitle "为你绽放" (Blooming for you). At the bottom left, there is a red banner with the text "抢票热线" (Ticket Hotline), the phone number "400-707-9999", and the date "国家网球中心 2009.10.2-11". To the right of the stadium, there are logos for "ticketmaster" and "www.ticketmaster.cn", along with the text "官方票务网站". Below these, there is another red banner with the text "官方网站" and "www.chinaopen.com.cn", along with the "chinaopen" logo. Small text at the very bottom right indicates "中国官方指定平面设计: 北京理想创新设计艺术公司".

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中国网球公开赛

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中国官方指定平面设计: 北京理想创新设计艺术公司

Army trains first PR team

(AP) – The country's military has graduated its first class of public relations officers trained to explain its policies to foreign audiences, the official army newspaper reported, a move reflecting the growing international involvement of the traditionally insular and highly secretive force.

A two-week training course included classes on the recent dispatch of ships to carry out anti-piracy patrols in the Gulf of Aden, as well as joint China-India anti-terror drills and other international missions, the

People's Liberation Army Daily reported.

The 51 PR officers from all service branches graduated last Thursday from the PLA's Nanjing Institute of Politics, where they were taught by professors from top schools, including the elite Tsinghua University, the paper said.

Course work included mock news conferences, with reporters from the army daily and state-run Xinhua news agency.

"The purpose of this training is to raise the opinion-forming abilities of the force's

foreign publicity team and advance the innovation and development of the military's publicity work," it said.

In recent years, the army has embarked on UN peacekeeping operations, joint training with other countries' militaries and a growing list of port calls and goodwill missions.

The dispatch in December of three ships to combat piracy off Somalia marked the first time the navy was sent on a mission so far from China's shores.

Expert view

China's growing international military involvement makes such media training an imperative, Yan Xuetong, head of Tsinghua University's Institute of International Studies, said.

The Chinese military's interactions with its foreign counterparts have increased in recent years. Foreign military attachés have been invited to view some of the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) training, while the navies of Japan, the US and other regional powers have been asked to send vessels to

join a sail-by marking the Chinese navy's 60th anniversary next month.

The army needs to learn about international practices, how to be diplomatic to foreign military officials and how to give speeches in front of the media, Yan said.

Since China's growing military force is a sensitive topic, its growing foreign involvement has raised concerns in the region. The US and other foreign militaries have also long complained about

the PLA's lack of openness, particularly regarding the intent behind its ballooning defense spending.

The country needs a team to emphasize that China's military is a purely defensive force that poses no danger to other nations, Yan said.

Meanwhile, the Defense Ministry has announced the establishment of a spokesman's office to accept media inquiries, although there has been little apparent follow through. **(Agencies)**



Is your hero included?

An impressive Chinese oil painting of 100 famous historical figures has set the online community here abuzz, with netizens pouring over the fresco as they attempt to identify every single face.

This 6-meter-by-2.6-meter painting crams together centuries of heroes,

villains and celebrities, mixing the East with the West, and the dead with the living.

Most people would have no problems identifying the likes of Albert Einstein, Gandhi and William Shakespeare.

But more obscure ones like Chinese opera artist Mei Lanfang and Russian

emperor Peter the Great would probably stump many.

It is giving history buffs here, and increasingly in other places as well, endless fun in spotting the personalities and discussing their placements and depictions in the painting.

IC Photo

Consumerism yet to catch on in China

(USA Today) – Wang Zhibo runs a successful business, has plenty of money in the bank and would love to buy a house and trade in his humble second-hand car for a US \$14,600 (100,000 yuan) Volkswagen Santana 3000.

Just what the crumbling world economy needs – a guy with money to spare and an appetite for houses and cars.

But Wang, 33, won't be coming to the rescue, at least not anytime soon.

The Beijing entrepreneur is hoarding cash until he sees how the Chinese economy weathers the storm. "This year, I wanted to buy a house and a better car, but I won't do it soon because of the economic crisis," he says. "I still must save rather than spend."

Wang's cautious attitude is typical – and a key reason China's 1.3 billion consumers are unlikely to dip into their vast savings and go on a shopping spree that would recharge sputtering factories in their own country and around the world.

Shanghai-based research firm Data

Driven Marketing Asia (DDMA) last month surveyed 602 consumers in five Chinese cities. The findings, released last week, were sobering for anyone holding out hope for a Chinese consumption boom: 45 percent were reducing their spending because of their concerns about the economy while 12 percent said they'd already lost their jobs.

No one can spend like the Americans

"The idea that the Chinese can pick up the slack now that American shopaholics have gone on the wagon is rubbish," DDMA director Sam Mulligan says. "The Chinese have never been huge consumers of imported products ... It's crazy to think they're going to switch and start consuming. We're living in La La Land if we expect them to," he said.

"We can't get them to replicate Americans," says Paul French, the British marketing director of research firm Access Asia. "Americans are just so good at consumerism ... Although the rest of us try, it is very hard to compete," he said.

Why the Chinese save so much

Chinese families pinch pennies for good reasons. The Chinese social safety net – pensions and health care coverage – is threadbare. So the Chinese people pile up savings to protect themselves from medical catastrophe, to fend off poverty in retirement and to take care of their parents. Until the social safety net is fixed, says Chi Lo, director of research at Ping An of China Asset Management, savings will remain high.

"We have no insurance," Wang Zhibo said. "If any of us went to the hospital we would have to pay all the bills ourselves. I must pay for my son's education in the future, and my parents are old and need looking after."

Moreover, China's financial system is backwards. Consumer credit, including mortgage lending, is in its infancy, so "consumers cannot leverage their consumption," Chi says. Although that doesn't sound so bad after the US mortgage meltdown, it does make it harder to rev up spending and jump-start economic growth.

Door-to-door hunt for soldier's killer

(AFP) – Police have launched a door-to-door search for a man who shot dead a teenage soldier on duty outside army barracks in southwest China, the *China Daily* reported Tuesday.

Han Junliang, 18, was shot twice in the chest last Thursday in the city of Chongqing, and police have announced a 300,000-yuan reward for anyone able to help arrest the suspect, the newspaper said.

The paper, quoting an unnamed police source, said preliminary investigations suggested the killer might be Tibetan. "A number of Tibetan separatists had snuck into town from (nearby) Chengdu and were attempting to stage a bombing in downtown Chongqing," the source said.

The government of Chongqing, which has a population of 14 million, refused to comment on the allegations. "We don't have any further information and cannot confirm the identity of the suspect," a spokesman, who would only give his surname as Ma, said.

The source told the paper that the attacker's face was not clearly visible on images captured by surveillance cameras. A description of the suspect said he was "dark skinned."

Foreigners studying in China exceed 200,000

The number of foreign students in China reached a record high of 223,499 in 2008, a 14.32 percent increase over 2007, an official with the Ministry of Education said Wednesday.

Foreign students were attending 592 higher educational institutions throughout the country, Zhang Xiuqin, head of the ministry's international cooperation and exchange department, said at a press conference in Beijing.

"China has become one of the most popular destinations for foreign students because of its history and culture, as well as improving government services," Zhang said.

The government increased scholarships for foreign students in recent years. In 2008, 13,516 foreign students received a scholarship, 33.15 percent more than the previous year. Those scholarships included tuition, housing and medical insurance, Zhang said.

According to the ministry, the government invested 500 million yuan in 2008 to finance foreign students. Recipients received a monthly stipend between 1,400 and 2,000 yuan.

Since March last year, China has been using a database to keep track of every foreign student in the country.

Ministry statistics show that the Republic of Korea, the US and Japan were the top three sources of foreign students in China. **(Agencies)**

Abortion pill to cut gerbil population

(AP) – Forestry officials in the country's far west have resorted to scattering abortion pills near gerbil burrows in a bid to halt a rodent plague threatening the desert region's fragile ecosystem.

The pellets, which resemble bran feed, have "little effect on other animals," but can prevent pregnancy in gerbils and also induce a miscarriage in already pregnant females, Xinhua news agency said.

In 2003, officials installed hundreds of perches for owls hoping the birds would cut back the rodent population, but gerbils have continued to be a problem, it said.

Gerbils use too much of the area's limited grass to make their burrows and damage plant roots with their underground digging, it said.

Desertification is a major concern for China. Deserts currently cover about one-third of the country and officials fear global warming will accelerate their expansion.

Buffet invites BYD to show off electric car

By Huang Daohen

The nation's top rechargeable battery and automaker BYD said Tuesday it would display its new electric car models at Warren Buffet's annual shareholder meeting in May.

The American billionaire investor will hold a general meeting of shareholders on May 2 in Omaha, Nebraska, US. Buffet invited BYD to show its products at the meeting, and the company is confirmed to attend.

BYD President Wang Chuanfu will attend and demonstrate its F3DM or E6 model to shareholders, Xu An, the company's public relations manager, said.

Final selection of the model is pending, and the company is working on tour details, he said.

The company recently made a leap in electric car manufacturing. Its E6 can travel more than 402 kilometers on battery power alone: double the range achieved by US and European electric carmakers, Xinhua reported. BYD's innovative battery, used in its dual mode cars, can fully charge in nine hours from a regular electrical outlet, even much faster



at charging stations.

BYD's F3DM, its first mass-produced plug-in electric hybrid sedan, was launched December a year ahead of the GM Volt. Only GM and Toyota have announced plans to launch plug-in hybrid vehicles by 2010.

Xu said the F3DM is only sold to government agencies and corporations now, but the company will start national sales promotions in June.

Berkshire Hathaway didn't say why BYD was invited. Last September, Buffet bought 10 percent of BYD for HK \$1.8 billion (1.6 billion yuan). It was his first investment in a Chinese company.

Wen Yijun, industrial analyst with Oriental Securities, said BYD's trip was an opportunity to pave a way into the North American market, its longstanding target.

BYD's sales increased about 28 percent from 21,915 units in January to 23,819 units in February. "This is already a domestic market record for the recession, so the company should look for potential markets outside of China," Wen said.

GE wins natural gas contract

General Electric said Wednesday it has been awarded a US \$300 million (2 billion yuan) contract for work on a new east-west natural gas pipeline that is expected to boost Chinese fuel use.

GE's oil and gas division will provide compression equipment and turbines for the PetroChina pipeline that will run 8,700 kilometers through 13 provinces. It will extend from the western provinces to Shanghai, serving 400 million people along its route.

The pipeline, the country's second east-west project, is expected to raise the share of natural gas in primary energy consumption to 5 percent from 3.5 percent.

With the contract, the value of GE's total orders for work on three pipelines rises to more than \$600 million. Those include an original east-west project and a pipeline that carries natural gas from Sichuan to Shanghai.

Nike says to stop shipments from China

Sportswear producer Nike said Wednesday it would stop orders with three footwear factories in China as the global downturn forces the company to trim output.

It will also terminate shipments from a number of apparel contract plants, Nike said. The locations of the apparel factories were not revealed.

"This is part of a long-term consolidation of our supply chain that we began in mid-2007," Erin Dobson, the company's spokeswoman, said.

Nike has given the factories between six and twelve months to find new customers to fill their capacity, she said, adding the company would keep "reviewing (its) supply chain for efficiencies."

ANZ to launch two new banking operations

Australia and New Zealand Banking Group, seeking to grow its Asian business, outlined plans Wednesday for two new banking operations in China and the expansion of its existing network there.

Australia's fourth-largest lender said it was seeking regulatory approval for a wholly owned locally incorporated bank subsidiary and a new rural bank in the west.

It also planned to open 20 of its own branches by 2012, ANZ said in a statement. It currently has two foreign bank branches and a representative office.

"Western China is an area of growth and opportunity ... they are obviously positioning for the longer term. It shows their intent," Rohan Walsh, investment manager at Karara Capital, said.

The bank's move into the less-developed west supported the government's rural reform strategy, ANZ said. (Agencies)

Gold consumption trails only India

By He Jianwei

Domestic demand for gold jewelry reached 395.6 tons last year, second only to India, according to statistics released by the World Gold Council.

"Gold demand in China last year was extremely resilient to the global economic recession," Albert Cheng, managing director of Far East in World Gold Council, said Tuesday at the award ceremony of AngloGold's gold jewelry design competition.

The annual increase in total tonnage, 68 tons, easily exceeded that of any other country. The next closest were Vietnam and Thailand, which both increased

around 38 tons.

In US dollar value terms, annual demand on the Chinese mainland was 51 percent above levels in 2007.

Cheng said investment demand was the main contributor to strong growth on the Chinese mainland, although jewelry demand showed considerable resilience to worsening economic conditions.

The mainland has been affected by the global economic crisis. As at late December, the Shanghai composite index was down 70 percent from its 2007 peak, exports have fallen and real estate development has slowed.

"Investors have been looking for alternative destinations to park their savings. Gold's safe haven status was a significant drawing point – retail investment demand dominated the increase in total tonnage," he said.

Many consumers have amassed serious war chests in the 30 years since the country's economic reform. Cheng said consumer demand for gold jewelry before the economic crisis depended on the accumulation of wealth. But since the crisis, gold accumulation has depended on investment.

"Buying gold jewelry has become a refuge for money," he said.

Although he admits that the world's gold prices can be affected by the economic crisis in the next two or three years, Cheng is still optimistic.

"Consumer demand for gold jewelry in European and American countries may decrease in the future, but the markets in China, India, Indonesia and other southeast Asian countries will continue to grow," he said.

On the mainland, where the jewelry sector is dominated by 24 carat gold, an underlying investment motive is likely to provide ongoing support for jewelry demand, he said.

Market watch

Yum! Brands, owner of Taco Bell, Pizza Hut and KFC, agreed to pay US \$63 million (430 million yuan) for a 20 percent stake in Little Sheep Group to win more diners.

The US restaurant operator will buy 205.5 million shares in the hot-pot specialist, Little Sheep said in a Hong Kong stock-exchange filing Wednesday. Yum is buying the stake from controlling shareholder Possible Way International, and 3i Group, Prax Capital Fund and Billion Year International.

Yum is getting a stake in a 375-restaurant chain in the only economy among the world's top five that grew in the fourth quarter. Louisville, Kentucky-based Yum is opening a store a day in China, where it is offering more local cuisines at its East Dawning chain, as well as at KFC and Pizza Hut outlets.

Yum! brands to buy Hot-pot Chain



"China remains the biggest growth opportunity in the restaurant industry in the 21st century," Sam Su, vice chairman of Yum! and president of Yum Restaurants China, said in the statement distributed today over Business Wire. Yum! China has

about 3,000 stores, contributing almost 28 percent to the chain's total revenue last year.

Little Sheep posted its biggest gain in eight weeks, rising 13.7 percent to close at HK \$2.98 (2.6 yuan) in Hong Kong trading. The stock has climbed

44.7 percent this year, compared with a 5.3 percent decline in the city's benchmark Hang Seng Index.

"We see a perfect partnership here and a perfect time for Yum! to go in and work as a partner to continue the next phase of growth," Anna Cheung, a 3i partner and co-head of the company's China operations, said. The private equity firm generated a "more than three times return" on its investment in Little Sheep, she said without elaborating.

"Our job is not to hold public equity, but be a fund manager and ride the stock market cycle," Cheung said, when asked why the stake was being sold now.

The acquisition is expected to be complete "by this summer," Kentucky-based Yum! said in a prepared statement.

(Agencies)



Wang Xiaodong, one of the book's authors

New nationalistic book says China unhappy with the West

By Wang Yu

When a book called *China Can Say No* came out in 1996, it began a debate on Chinese nationalism and became one of that year's best-sellers. The book criticized the attitude of Western countries toward China, particularly the US, and international relations after the Cold War. Over 5 million copies of the book have been sold and it has been translated into eight languages.

Now, 13 years later, a similar book is on bookstore shelves. But unlike its predecessor, this one has been the subject of more criticism than praise, something which the authors may have already expected.

Five authors, including Song Qiang who also contributed to *China Can Say No*, this month released their collaborative work *Unhappy China*. The book contains severe criticism of Western nations, with the harshest words reserved for the US.

Readers will find topics such as "Why Don't You Americans Lower Your Living Standards?" "We Cannot Allow Americans to Kidnap the World" and "The Sino-French Relationship Should Not be Important." Authors also direct their rage toward Chinese intellectuals like Wang Xiaobo, one of the country's most reputable novelists who died in 1997. Song Qiang says Wang was "a defeatist who could not break into Western society."

Song Xiaojun, a co-author who is also a military expert, said the writers used to gather



The controversial book, released this month, sparked a new round of debates on nationalism.

Xinhua Photos

to casually discuss these topics. Last October 3, they came together again and had a long discussion that lasted three days. A recording of the talk, summarized by Song Xiaojun and their publisher, became the raw mate-

rial for the book.

But China has drastically changed in the last decade and it does not look like *Unhappy China* can replicate the success of *China Can Say No*. Reviews of the new book on douban.com

results, the system needs to be improved, and we should not blindly believe them," Gong said during the lecture.

Similarly, Nankai University, another leading university in Tianjin, said it once rejected an offer of "cooperation" by some ranking organizations.

Some list maintainers flagrantly ask universities to buy their way into a higher posi-

Comment

Narrow, outdated thinking

The authors are still using the mindset of the 1960s. I can't agree with their logic, and such ideas are quite narrow and out of date.

— He Yuxin, newspaper editor

Similar to ultra-nationalists in other countries

This ultranationalism demanding toughness and standing up to the hostile West is very far from the concerns of most Chinese people. But it's not just China that has a group of people who think their country is always suffering at the hands of foreigners and they should get tough and put national interests first. These people exist in Britain, the US and lots of other countries, including France — look at the popularity of Jean-Marie Le Pen over the last two decades.

One thing the authors of this book are doing I think is making some seri-

ous points but trying to use a nationalistic coat to make them both not threatening to the government and to make headlines and sell the book.

— Richard Spencer, former China bureau chief of The Daily Telegraph

Countries interdependent in this globalized era

In this globalized era, countries heavily depend on each other, and thinking in terms of one against the other is thinking in the past. I am saying this as a German with the sad experience of our history: Hitler came to power with the ideology that other countries would be against Germany and humiliate it. The result was the death of millions of people and the destruction of Germany itself.

— Adrian Geiges, former Beijing correspondent of Stern magazine and author of How the World Revolution Once Accidentally Started in the Black Forest

Notorious university rankings make a comeback

By Zhang Dongya

University rankings were never trust worthy or credible, but families with children about to enter college cannot ignore them.

Last week, Gong Ke, president of Tianjin University, admitted in a lecture that there is a "ranking sponsorship." Gong's revelation aroused public anger toward ranking bodies, accusing them of deception.

Gong said the chaotic ranking system needs to be regulated. "None of the organizations asked for data from our university before they made their ranking, so the source of the data is questionable and incomplete. Second, no one group invited experts in the field to give an opinion after their rankings were released. Though we cannot completely refute the

results, the system needs to be improved, and we should not blindly believe them," Gong said during the lecture.

Similarly, Nankai University, another leading university in Tianjin, said it once rejected an offer of "cooperation" by some ranking organizations.

Some list maintainers flagrantly ask universities to buy their way into a higher posi-

tion. These dealings might be the reason why one university would get hugely contrasting reviews on different ranking guides, which in turn confused readers. Middle school and university students sometimes even get into fights in the scramble to get a ranking list.

The Ministry of Education has said several times it discourages university rankings, but such

practices persist. In Beijing's biggest bookstores like Zhongguancun Bookstore and Wangfujing Bookstore, *Unhappy China* did not make the best-seller list, though it did on dangdang.com.

publisher to intrigue readers.

In Beijing's biggest bookstores like Zhongguancun Bookstore and Wangfujing Bookstore, *Unhappy China* did not make the best-seller list, though it did on dangdang.com.

Netbig.com, China's largest and oldest university ranking organization, has released a comprehensive university ranking every year since 1999. The company claims to employ a scientific evaluation system, and its rankings have been recognized as largely fair. But its sources and evaluation process have also come into question.

Comment

Comprehensive ranking misleading

I don't think the comprehensive ranking makes any sense. Being the No.1 university does not mean all your departments are the best in the country, but it misleads the public. For example, my alma mater Heidelberg University, the No. 1 school in Germany, has the best medical department in the country. But its sociology and anthropology are not that strong. Rankings should therefore be based on the departments instead of the school. Many well-known universities later disappoint students; they are high on the ranking but actually have below average facilities, like libraries, or a low teacher-student ratio, which is an important factor.

— Oliver Radtke, multimedia planner

Abolish unscientific ranking system

First-class universities are

becoming the measuring stick, while ranking guides have become a "system." Abolishing the unscientific academic evaluation system is urgently needed to help improve the academic atmosphere in universities.

— Yang Yuliang, professor at Fudan University

A correct and reliable one needed

It is sad to know the ranking system is proven unreliable — yet people still rely on it. We

have to admit rankings are an important reference for students applying to universities, so I'd prefer if the government releases a ranking to get rid of the ones that just confuse us.

— Tongqi Tianxiaren, netizen on dzh.mop.com

Society's snobbish views responsible

Famous universities like Beijing University and Tianjin University have the strength and power to refuse to pay the

illegal ranking fees, but other nameless ones are easily persuaded for a better place on the list. Society with its snobbish views is responsible for the faulty ranking system. We should pay more attention to a person's abilities and progress instead of his or her educational background. Only in this way could a university retain its independent spirit, which is invaluable.

— Wang Shichuan, critic with the Beijing News

Snapshots of China at sleep



A man takes a nap sitting on a bike while leaning against a wall.

By Zheng Lu

As you hurriedly zigzag through streets and lanes on your way to school or work, do you ever notice people napping on the curb or catching Zzzs leaning against a wall? In this age of no-time-to-look-around nonstop action, probably not. But a German who worked in the country apparently did, and he has a Web site full of photos to show for it.

"Before you click through my large collection of photos, you should not forget what you hear and read daily in your home country's media about China's boom," Bernd Hagemann said on his site sleepingchinese.com.

Hagemann, chief financial officer of German firm Karcher, said the international media often talk about "The Sleeping Giant" or "The Awakening of the Red Dragon" with an undertone meant to frighten Westerners. Through his photo collection "The Sleeping Chinese," he wanted to show that "the reality definitely looks more peaceful."

He was sent to Shanghai by his company in 2003, and lived in the southern metropolis until this year. Hagemann said he likes to discover new places, so he always carried around his camera when cycling or walking through the city, or travelling around the country.

He soon observed an interesting phenomenon: Chinese people comfortably nap or sleep in public. "At every corner you can see people napping in the strangest positions, even snoring. Only



A group of sleepers.

a mattress and pillows are missing," Hagemann said, adding this was a strange sight to him and others who grew up in the West. So he began capturing those scenes with his camera.

As his photo collection became bigger, friends suggested he create a Web site for it. He did in 2007, and sleepingchinese.com now contains over 700 pictures.

Among their interesting revelations is that people can fall asleep in the oddest positions. Two vendors at a seafood market dozed in a basin like babies in a cradle; but since they were too big for the basin, their heads and limbs protruded like bug legs. In another picture, a young security guard fell asleep leaning on a

pole. Meanwhile, a family of four adults and one child napped on a curb oblivious to the traffic and passersby.

Hagemann said what fascinated him while taking those photos was "the calmness, the flexibility and the adaptability of those who are jointly responsible for the revival of China."

He said he never went out for the sole purpose of finding such scenes, but that on a "successful" weekend, he would bring back home five to 10 photos. He found that the prime time to snap such shots was around lunchtime, when most Chinese people are in the habit of taking a nap. "Sleeping is very important (especially after lunch) in the Chinese cul-



A man sleeps on a piece of cloth tied to a truck.

Photos provided by Bernd Hagemann

ture," Hagemann said.

It has been two years since Hagemann put up his Web site, which has already drawn more than 600,000 visitors from all over the world.

He is maintaining the site and welcomes submissions to keep "The Sleeping Chinese" collection growing. He will soon head to Argentina and who knows what gems he will discover there.

Guilin home to 'Flying Tiger' Park



Larry Jobe as the launch of the park's construction.

Photo provided by Lingui Tourism Bureau

By Venus Lee

Guilin will soon become home to an aviation park to commemorate the US "Flying Tigers" air squadron who helped China fight the Japanese in World War Two.

The 17-hectare park is being built at the Yangtang Airport, about 15 kilometers from Guilin City, where the squadron's planes were based during the war.

The 160-million-yuan complex in Lingui County, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, will include a museum, a monument and replicas of wartime barracks and command posts, as well as flight simulation rides.

"It will become an important

place for 'Flying Tiger' members and relatives to commemorate the rapport in the past. It will also strengthen Sino-American relations," Li Fushen, director of the local tourism bureau, said.

Members of the Flying Tigers Historical Organization, dedicated to preserving the memory of the squadron, pledged to raise US \$400,000 (2.7 million yuan) for the park. The group also donated to the county some of the pilots' memorabilia at a ceremony last Sunday that marked the beginning of the construction.

"It was meaningful for both the Chinese and American people to experience fighting side by side against the Japanese army during World War II. We couldn't have

made such remarkable achievements without the Chinese people's help and protection," Larry Jobe, president of the organization, said.

The Flying Tigers was formed in 1941 under the leadership of US General Claire Lee Chennault to help China resist invading Japanese troops. The American volunteer group, composed of former US military soldiers, was named "The Flying Tigers" by the Chinese who admired their courage. The Tigers were made up of three fighter squadrons with around 20 planes each.

An estimated 2,200 Flying Tigers members, and more than 900 Chinese airmen who fought alongside them, died in the war.

New TB strains threaten global health

By Han Manman

More money and better science are needed to rein in new strains of tuberculosis (TB) that are tough or nearly impossible to treat, the World Health Organization (WHO) said Tuesday in Beijing.

WHO released its annual TB update on Tuesday, also World TB Day, an event meant to raise awareness of a disease that despite being one of the world's oldest killers still claims the lives of more than 1.5 million

people every year. About 9 million people are infected, most of them in Asia and Africa.

TB is contagious: like the common cold, it spreads through the air. But only people who are sick with TB in their lungs are infectious.

"Drug-resistant tuberculosis is a growing global public health threat. We are at a turning point. We need to address it," Cornelia Hennig, WHO's TB program coordinator for China, said at a news briefing

in Beijing.

The UN body said drug-resistant TB develops as a result of inconsistent or partial treatment when patients take medicines irregularly.

Hennig said there are severe shortcomings in tackling TB, and coordinated care for the disease fails largely because of feeble health care in developing countries that are hardest hit.

According to WHO statistics, an estimated 1.4 million TB cases occur in China annually,

of which 600,000 are infectious. It is not clear how many people in China die from the disease every year or how many multidrug-resistant TB cases there are in the country.

The report came a week before the start of an international conference in Beijing that will focus on ways to deal with drug-resistant TB strains.

Attendees of the three-day meeting include health ministers from 27 countries dealing with multidrug-resistant TB

cases, including India, China and Russia.

Discussions will revolve around how to increase prevention and management of multidrug-resistant TB cases, and participants will draft a five-year strategic plan, Liu Yuhong, a WHO program officer, said Tuesday.

The meeting, which begins Wednesday, is sponsored by WHO, along with the Chinese Ministry of Health and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Japan opens door to individual Chinese tourists

By Zhao Hongyi

The National Tourism Organization of Japan said Tuesday it has persuaded its government to issue visas to individual Chinese tourists from Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. It indicated a further opening of Japan's tour market to people who previously could only visit the country with tour groups.

The new policy, which takes effect July 1 following a one-year trial, covers individual travelers from all over China. Visa applicants need to certify however that they have a minimum annual income of 250,000 yuan.

The Japanese government will send 19 more staff members to its embassy and consulates in China to meet the expected surge in visa applications. From next year, Japan will entrust non-government agencies to evaluate applications and issue visas.

The Japanese government is considering stiff penalties to Japanese tour agencies in case any of their travelers end up illegally staying in the country.

In China, many netizens complained that the new regulation favors the rich. They appealed to Chinese citizens to boycott travel to Japan, especially since the two countries have an ongoing territorial dispute over the Diaoyu Islands (Senkaku Islands) in the East China Sea.

"Most of the Chinese have sufficient money to support their tours to Japan, but not sufficient for the '250,000 yuan annual income' required," Cheng Mingchang, director of the Century Holiday Travel Agency (Shenzhen) said.

Cheng also complained the rule does not cover rich cities like Shenzhen. "We are doing quite well in tour groups and will wait for the second wave in July next year," he said.

Israel opens tourism office in Beijing



The first group tour from China to Israel was launched last September.

Photo provided by Israel Embassy

By Han Manman

Israel, which views China as a major source of tourists, recently opened its first tourism office in Beijing. The country gained "approved destination" status from the Chinese government in September, a permit that allows organized groups from China to visit Israel.

The office will open in June, and details of its programs will soon be announced, Guy Kivetz, press officer for the Israeli Embassy, said. It is the country's 15th such branch overseas.

Chinese tourism has grown

dramatically in the last decade, and is regarded the greatest potential source of growth in international tourism, Kivetz said.

"The tourism ministry is working to remove obstacles and to welcome Chinese tourist in order to realize this potential during the global economic crisis," Israeli tourism minister Ruhama Avraham-Balila said.

"During the last decade, China's outgoing tourist market has demonstrated rapid growth and it is considered to still have significant growth potential," the minister

said, adding that Israel hopes to see an annual increase of 100,000 Chinese visitors in the next five years.

After China and Israel signed the Approved Destination Status agreement last September, tour guides began undergoing a Chinese-language training program as preparation for the expected influx of Chinese visitors.

Avraham-Balila said the five-month training program, which certifies guides from leading Chinese and Japanese tour groups, includes lessons on the nature and customs of Chinese travelers, their pre-

ferred destinations, entertainment and services.

Also established were training sessions on Asian cuisine targeted at chefs in hotels and cooking schools around Israel. According to the Israeli tourism ministry, food options are a big factor in Chinese tourists' picks of travel destinations.

Since security remains a big concern for Chinese tourists, Kivetz said, "Israel is a safe country. There is no tourist that has ever been attacked. You can ask people who have been there; they will tell you the real situation."



Christina Thoben
Photo by Wang Ran

German region seeks Chinese investors

By Gan Tian

Germany's North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) region recently sent a delegation of 20 people to Beijing for a dialogue with the government and to find more Chinese investors.

NRW is known as the "land of decision makers" because of the list of top firms headquartered in the region. One in every two of Germany's 50 top-

selling companies is based in this area, including Bayer, Bertelsmann, Deutsche Post World Net, Deutsche Telekom, Lanxess and ThyssenKrupp.

Now it is seeking more Chinese business partners.

"China has become one of NRW's most important economic partners, and we will continue to strengthen the relationship," Christina Thoben,

NRW's minister for economics and resources, said.

Thoben said NRW will provide a free package for Chinese investors.

NRW has been a leading choice for Chinese enterprises that wish to invest overseas. There are currently more than 600 Chinese companies expanding into the area, a number five times what it was in 2003.



Greenpeace showing support at Yongdingmen for the Copenhagen climate meeting

Photo provided by GreenPeace

By Zheng Lu

People bundled up against the cold at the Yongdingmen tower Monday evening to see the markings that would appear on the ancient wall. Then appeared the words "Time is running out to stop global warming," shone by a projector. Below them were the number of days, hours and seconds until the 2009 climate change conference in Denmark.

"The world is now in imminent peril. The acceleration of global warming has outpaced our expectations," said Li Yan, a campaigner for Greenpeace China, organizer of the event. "The Copenhagen climate meeting is humanity's last chance to save the world from a catastrophic climate crisis."

This December, the UN Climate Change Report Summit will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in which world leaders are expected to sign a new accord to

cope with climate change. This would be a history-making pact following the 2005 Kyoto Protocol, Li said.

Apart from launching the countdown, the event Monday featured a short film showing various natural calamities such as floods, blizzards and droughts brought about by global warming. China was shown to be among the countries facing an especially severe environmental crisis; the increase of temperature in the country is higher than the global average, and more than 80 percent of its glaciers in the west are continuously melting.

The country is expected to face water and food shortages because of climate change, Li said. "As one of the biggest producers of greenhouse gases, China should and must do more to avoid the disastrous aftermath of global warming."

Greenpeace has urged President Hu Jintao to attend the climate summit in Copenhagen and

draw up a pact beneficial to people and the environment.

The environmental NGO presented to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to Beijing last month an hourglass and a letter appealing for the two countries to cooperate in the fight against global warming.

"Through the US Embassy, she passed on the message that she has taken note of our appeal," Li Jiange, media officer at Greenpeace China, said. He said the best response would be to see the US and China working together to combat climate change.

Hans Xu, another Greenpeace officer, did not discount the contributions that ordinary citizens can make. "The average person should do their best to reduce the use of gas and energy," he said. People can do this by switching off unnecessary lights and taking the bus or subway instead of driving. Xu said the NGO will be holding a

series of activities in various cities to remind people of the importance of energy conservation and pollution reduction.

Beijing residents who witnessed the countdown at Yongdingmen gave different reactions. "If we do everything that is considered environmentally-friendly, life would become more inconvenient and the economy will suffer," one man said.

"I think the best way to go is to ask people to give up driving and take public transportation," said another man who supported the Greenpeace initiative.

The NGO has launched a Web site, icare.greenpeace.cn, and invited people to take part in the "I care" movement, which campaigns against global warming. The organization also invited citizens to participate in their monthly pro-environment events leading up to the opening of the Copenhagen summit.

Event

17th China Int'l Clothing and Accessories Fair

This year's China International Clothing and Accessories Fair showcases 80 international and local brands. Aside from fashion shows, product displays and trend exhibits, the fair also features the Copenhagen Fur Center, a producer of high-class fur.

Where: New China International Exhibition Center, Tianzhu Airport Industrial Zone, Shunyi District

When: March 26, 9:30 am - 5:30 pm
Tel: 8522 9579
Cost: 10 yuan

Qingming Festival

Learn about the Qingming Festival or Tomb-sweeping Day, in which the Chinese people commemorate loved ones who passed away.

When: March 27, 7:8:30 pm

Where: 2009 B North Tower SOHO Shangdu, 8 Dongdaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5869 6922
Cost: Free

Wukejia & Gaobo Chinese folk music performance

Wukejia and Gaobo, two Chinese folk musicians, perform with a guitar and a hand drum. Most of their music originate from the country's northwest, but they also love to sing old Chinese pop songs which are hardly heard anymore.

When: March 27, 7:30-10 pm

Where: CNEX Saloon Cafe, 2/F Building 1, Jing Yuan, 3 Guangqu Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6407 3571
Cost: 20 yuan

Puppet Show: Candy House

The hungry Hansel and Gretel ate all the cheese in the jar without asking their mother for permission. As punishment, they were sent to the forest to collect mushrooms. They forgot about their errand and ended up playing games until dusk. In the darkness, the two could not find their way home. They became worried and scared. Then all of a sudden, a strong wind blew them in front of a house made of candy.

Where: China Puppet Theater, A1 Anhua Xi Li, Yonghegong (opposite Sogo Department Store), Chaoyang District

When: March 27-28, 7:30-9 pm
Tel: 6417 7845
Cost: call for different packages

(By Wei Ying)

Keeping soccer alive through kids

By Huang Daohen

Children from all over the world living in Beijing have found another way to spend their spare time – playing soccer, rather than glued to *American Idol* on TV.

Tuesday is the happiest day of the week for Dylan Evans, 12, and his younger brother Kevin. After a whole day in school, the British boys hurry to attend an intensive soccer course at the Olympic Sports Center Stadium. There, they learn the rudiments of the game and have fun with other children.

"I love soccer and I really enjoy the games here," Dylan said. It is an especially joyful time for his team because they have just won the championship at an international junior friendship tournament.

Like Evans, as many as 30 children ages 8 to 15 attend the course. The program was



Boys having their soccer time at the Olympic Sports Center Stadium.

Photo provided by Beijing Guoan Yueye Football Club

designed and is taught by the Beijing Guoan Yueye Football Club. Founded 12 years ago, the club focuses on training young players who intend to join professional leagues, and teaching foreign and Chinese children fun-

damental soccer skills.

The training sessions, however, are not the end of the story. Guoan also sends players to participate in local youth league tournaments, Cai Wei, the club's founder and head coach, said.

Cai, a professional soccer player for 20 years before he started the club, said the group's main aim is to pass on the knowledge of soccer to the younger generation. At first, he provided free training to 20 children from Beijing whom he found to have potential.

"Every day after my part-time job, I taught them soccer," Cai said. Later, with more and more children coming to his class, he decided to start the club.

Cai said the club has not only grown in size, with members in elementary and middle schools, but also in reputation. But he finds the atmosphere for promoting soccer in the city far from satisfactory.

"Beijing has 30 to 40 youth soccer clubs, but it has a population of 20 million local and foreign people," Cai said, "There should be at least 200 clubs."

Pets can rest in peace

By Venus Lee

The market for pet funerals and interments is expanding with the approach of Tomb-sweeping Day, when people visit their loved one's grave to pay respect.

Wang Huihong, a retiree in Nongzhangguan Nan Li community, did not know how to lay her pet dog to rest until she decided to hold a funeral for the animal last weekend.

"Some of my neighbors secretly buried their pets in a bush near the park at night, but I was afraid leaving the body in a garbage can would have a negative effect on the environment. Pet cemeteries provide an appropriate and decent way to deal with dead pets," the 64-year-old said.

According to the China Small Animal Protection Association (CSAPA), there are over one million pets in the city, although only 550,000 of these are registered. Every year 80,000 to 90,000 pets die, of which a small fraction are cremated.

Lu Di, the CSAPA director, said that after the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, people began to realize the hazards of casually disposing of dead pets. Thus, more and more people have sought pet funeral services.

Lin Degui, president of the China Agricultural University Pet's Hospital, said the body of a dead animal contains many bacteria that can cause human and animal infection if not properly discarded. "A bacteria can survive for another year in the dead animal's bone marrow, while bacteria spores can last a number of years and can contaminate water sources," he said.

"For example, once a woman gets infected by Toxo, a parasite that dead cats usually carry, she will become susceptible to miscarriages or may become infertile."

Pet's Paradise Cemetery is one



More Chinese people treat dogs as part of the family.



One of the pet tombs, at Chongwu Tiantang or pet heaven

of the places that provide pet cremation and interment services. Cremation costs 300 to 600 yuan,

depending on the animal's size; an urn, which holds the ashes, requires a deposit of 100 to 200

Photos by Chen Shaochun

yuan per year.

The price of a pet coffin ranges from 500 to 1,000 yuan, depending on its size and material. For 500 yuan, pet owners can choose to adopt a tree, beside which their pet's urn will be buried.

Below are several other places that provide pet funeral and interment services:

Chongwu Tiantang

Where: Baifucun Dong, Changping District
Tel: 6077 1455, 6227 4045

Boai Pet Service Center

Where: Northeast of Xidian Village, Machikou Town, Changping District
Tel: 6075 1033, 6486 0318

IGO Pet Club

Where: Southwest of Dadenggezhuang, Songzhuang Town, Tongzhou District
Tel: 8476 3451

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to:
weiyi@ynet.com

Where can I go for breast cancer screening in town? I can't afford international hospitals like the Beijing United Family Hospital. Is there a hospital here that caters especially to women?

You can go to major local hospitals like Xiehe Hospital or Beida Hospital. They all have a wing for foreign patients, but note that the queue at Beida Hospital may be too long. A lot of other hospitals provide cancer screening services. Check out ones close to your neighborhood.

I've seen people in gym locker rooms with cupping marks on various parts of their bodies. What is the health benefit of doing this? And is it true that acupuncture can help people lose weight? I've read various testimonials, but haven't actually met a person who can vouch for these results. I don't intend giving up exercise, but will this help?

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) theory, cupping helps to rid the body of heat or cold. One *Beijing Today* staff member recommends acupuncture to lose weight.

She said some people need a combination of acupuncture, diet and exercise to see results, while others slim down just through acupuncture. We are interested to know what works for you.

Do you know a tanning place around Wudaokou or somewhere in Haidian District? I know a few in Chaoyang District, but since I live in the Wudaokou university area, I don't want to travel too far.

There is a tanning salon on the third floor of Caizhi Guojia Dasha. (Where: 18 Zhongguancun Dong Lu, Haidian District)

Tel: 5166 0849

I'm looking for small ceramic beads with letters and floral designs, necklace strings and fasteners to make accessories. Where is a good place to get them?

You can find them on the fourth floor of both Yanxian and Silk Street, where pearls and other jewelry are sold. If they are not on display, just ask the salespeople for help. They should not cost much, so do not forget to bargain.

(By Wei Ying)

Beijing travel card extends to Tianjin and Hebei

By Zhang Dongya

As many as 15 attractions in Tianjin and eight in Hebei Province were added to the Beijing travel card, which brings a total of 58 scenic areas to the package. More attractions are expected to be included, the number of which is expected to reach a hundred by year-end.

With the purchase of the travel card, a person can visit all 58 places for free within the year, as many times as desired.

The annual travel pass was issued last December, featuring 35 tourist spots in the city including Fenghangling Nature Park in Haidian District and Kangxi Prairie in Yanqing County. Most of the destinations are on the city outskirts.

Last month, eight areas were added to the list, including Shengfang Ancient Town and Exhibition Hall for Folk Collections in Langfang, Hebei Province.

Last Saturday, another 15



Tianjin is attracting more Beijing tourists on weekends as its traffic improves.

places in Tianjin, including the Memorial Hall of Liang Qichao, made it in.

The card costs 100 yuan in Beijing and 130 yuan in Tianjin. People need to present an ID and a photograph upon purchase. Students and citizens older than 60, who hold the

required certification, can enjoy a special price of 60 yuan. Foreigners need to take their passport and a photograph.

The card is non-transferable and cannot be returned, exchanged or replaced if it gets lost. The travel cards will go on sale by April 30, and are valid till

December 31.

Instructions for using the card, including its online purchase service, are only available in Chinese. For more information, call 8010 6587.

Ways to buy the card:

1. Purchase online by filling out the form on the Web site bjlyp.com/dingpiao.aspx

2. Purchase at the following offices:

Where: 101, Jia 99, Fuyou Lu, Xicheng District

Tel: 6601 6592

Getting there: Take Bus 14 to Lingjing Hutong Dongkou stop

Where: Building 10, Shiliuyuan Xiaoqu Nan Li, Zhaogongkou Qiaonan, Nansanhuan, Fengtai District

Tel: 8666 7274

Getting there: Take Subway Line 5 to Songjiazhuang Station

3. They are also available at Tuanjiehu Park, Ritan Park, Haidian Park and the Zhongguancun Book Building.



Artistic ward in Nanjing Zutangshan Mental Hospital

Mad addo

The quest to heal

"(These men) make me believe in the existence of soul."

By He Jianwei

To separate madness and genius in art is to split hairs, especially when remembering Dutch post-Impressionist Vincent van Gogh, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche or the French symbolist poet Arthur Rimbaud.

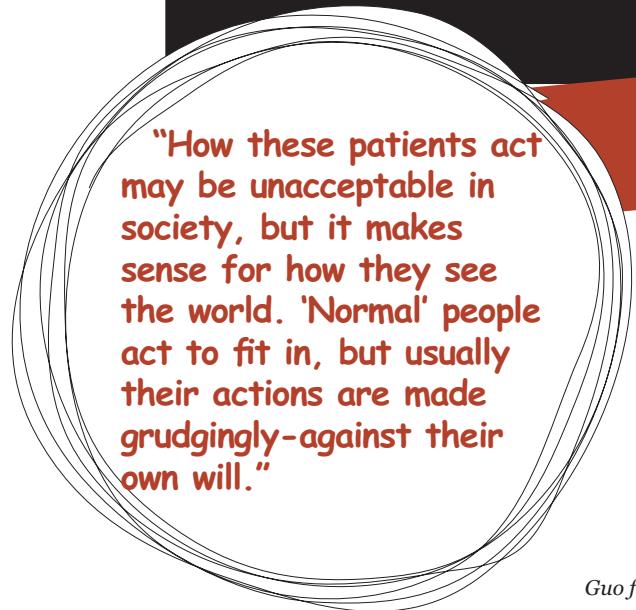
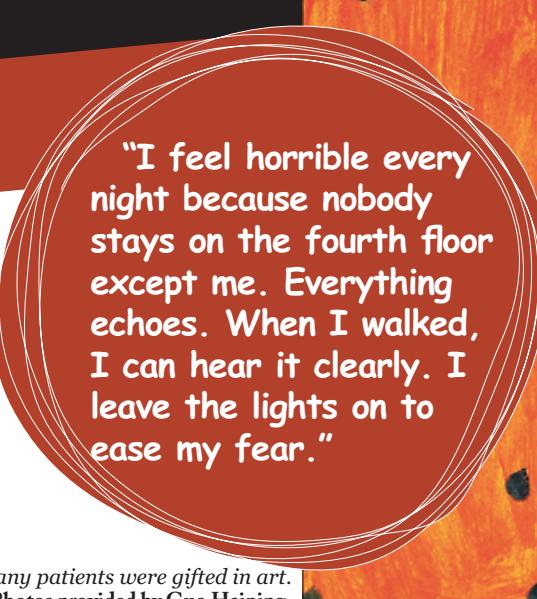
When Guo Haiping first walked the road of art 20 years ago, he believed himself mad. But there is a connection between the gift and insanity, and in 2006 he had himself committed for three month to learning what that connection was.

He spent his months as an art teacher to the institution's more permanent residents, and persuaded the hospital to open a permanent ward for its resident artists at the end of last year.

"How these patients act may be unacceptable in society, but it makes sense for how they see the world. 'Normal' people act to fit in, but usually their actions are made grudgingly-against their own will."

"I feel horrible every night because nobody stays on the fourth floor except me. Everything echoes. When I walked, I can hear it clearly. I leave the lights on to ease my fear."

Guo found many patients were gifted in art.
Photos provided by Guo Haiping



uart ost genius

Guo phoned the mother repeatedly, but was told it was a wrong number. A few months later he received another letter from the mother, this time saying her son killed himself.

It didn't take long to fill the tiny room with art supplies – its walls covered in patients' paintings. One of the more striking pieces, a portrait of Guo, was painted on a rare, sunny day in Nanjing.

The ward is clean and warm.

It is the work room of three of the hospital's most talented artists: Zhang Bing, 57, the manic depressive committed in 1993; Zhang Yubao, 32, the paranoid schizophrenic and guest of four years; and Wang Jun, 49, a schizophrenic and newcomer to the group.

The three became Guo's fast friends after he moved into the hospital on October 10, 2006: World Mental Health Day.

"I spent 10 months negotiating with the hospital staff. They didn't understand why a 'normal' person would want to live in a mental hospital, and they doubted I could help the patients," Guo says.

The staff knows Guo well – his own brother was committed at the hospital some 20 years ago. "I understand mental patients. My older brother's wild actions were a response to irritations from the outside world, even from a peculiar glance," he said.

The hospital allowed Guo in and gave him a studio where he could stay for three months with the patients.

"I feel horrible every night because nobody stays on the fourth floor except me. Everything echoes. When I walked, I can hear it clearly. I leave the lights on to ease my fear," he wrote in his diary.

But despite his self-assignment, Guo says painting cannot be taught. Although doctors in other mental hospitals teach patients to draw, he says it is useless. "They treat patients like 'normal' people and don't encourage their ideas. Their 'works' are just the doctor's – but drawn by the patient's hand."

Before the patients enter Guo has laid out their paper and pencils, but he does not ask them to draw. "(It) is a way for the patients to relax. If they want to draw, then they can pick up a pencil on their own," he said.

Guo inspires 20 of the 100 patients to draw.

He says some of the patients show a surprising talent for art. Zhang Yubao, given a chance to criticize Guo's own work, murmurs it is "Tough, but tender."

"(These men) make me believe in the existence of soul. It is strange that most of them draw above the paper rather than in front of it. Maybe that's what is so different between them and other artists: artists work on the ground, but these patients fly," he says.

When they run out of inspiration, Guo encourages them to draw anything. A snake follows a fish, but what to draw next is a mystery.

"(The man) went into the studio, but he didn't draw. He would just sweat and look strained. I told him try to draw dots and lines to work out what he was thinking," Guo says.

And those lines transformed into grand curves in carefully selected color.

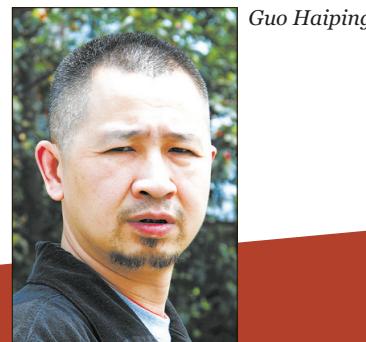
"I only help them find a way to express themselves. What comes out is all their own," Guo says.

The hospital stay went well except for one episode. "One patient kind of scared me, and after that I had to be cautious around him," he says.

This patient drew a man's head covered in vertical lines. When Guo asked what he drew, the man replied it was a head ravaged by hungry snails.

"He was a quiet man, so his words scared me. But at last, nothing happened."

After his time in the hospital, Guo collaborated with psychiatrist Wang Yu on 2007 *Demented Art: Report on Chinese Mental Patients' Art* (291 pp, Hunan Fine Arts Publishing House, 68 yuan) to introduce the world inside



Guo Haiping

the head of a mental patient.

Wang gives a brief medical history about each patient from the viewpoint of a psychiatrist, and Guo writes a story about his experience from his own artistic view.

"Normal" people always fear or discriminate against those with mental problems. I want to stand up for their rights in the name of art," Guo says.

His saddest story came when a patient's mother in Shanghai wrote to him begging him to have her son transferred to his hospital: where her son was committed, there was no art.

Guo phoned the mother repeatedly, but was told it was a wrong number. A few months later he received another letter from the mother, this time saying her son killed himself.

Originally, Guo hoped for more hospital space where he might teach 40 patients. By the time negotiations ended, the number was slashed by 90 percent.

To help more patients experience art, he is collaborating with the *Jinling Evening Post*, Nanjing's biggest paper, to put out the call for gifted mental patients. The paper pledged not to leak respondent's information, but few people answered.

"Although I have a mentally ill family member, it shocks me how many families are afraid to let the world know about their own members with mental problems," Guo says.

Maybe, he says, it is the people outside the walls who are mentally ill. "How these patients act may be unacceptable in society, but it makes sense for how they see the world. 'Normal' people act to fit in, but usually their actions are made grudgingly-against their own will," he says.

This September, Guo has an exhibition "Medicine" in Nanjing. He is inviting 30 artists from Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing to participate. "This one is not made for mental patients, but for the 'normal' people. I want them to see we are wrong to discriminate against the 'irrational.' We should treat them the same," he says.

To his way of thinking, it's a fundamental lack of respect that is at the root of "mental illness."

Guo's studio lives on even though he has left, and the sleepy Nanjing Zutangshan Mental Hospital was restocked with easels, brushes, pencils, paper and paint on December 24. The hospital is in the mountains by the resting site of two Southern Tang Dynasty (937-975) emperors and a temple.

(Patients in this story have been assigned pseudonyms.)

Drilling for the past of Texas' rich

By Charles Zhu

When George W. Bush went from Texas to the White House, the public knew his trip was powered by Texas oil. After he finished his second term, he returned to his oil-rich homeland.

Since Bush's rise and fall, many have wondered how Texas oil money plays in US politics. Bryan Burrough gives a clear picture of how black gold made kings in *The Big Rich: The Rise and Fall of the Greatest Texas Oil Fortunes* (466pp, The Penguin Press, US \$29.95).

Burrough offers a complete picture of oil money starting with H. L. Hunt. In September 1930, the bigamist in a straw boater drove up to a wooden oil rig by a pine forest in east Texas. He tells in detail the histories of four legendary families – the Hunts, Basses, Murchisons and Cul-lens – "who rose the highest and, in some cases, fell the hardest" during a century when Texas crude drove the world's ships, trains and cars.

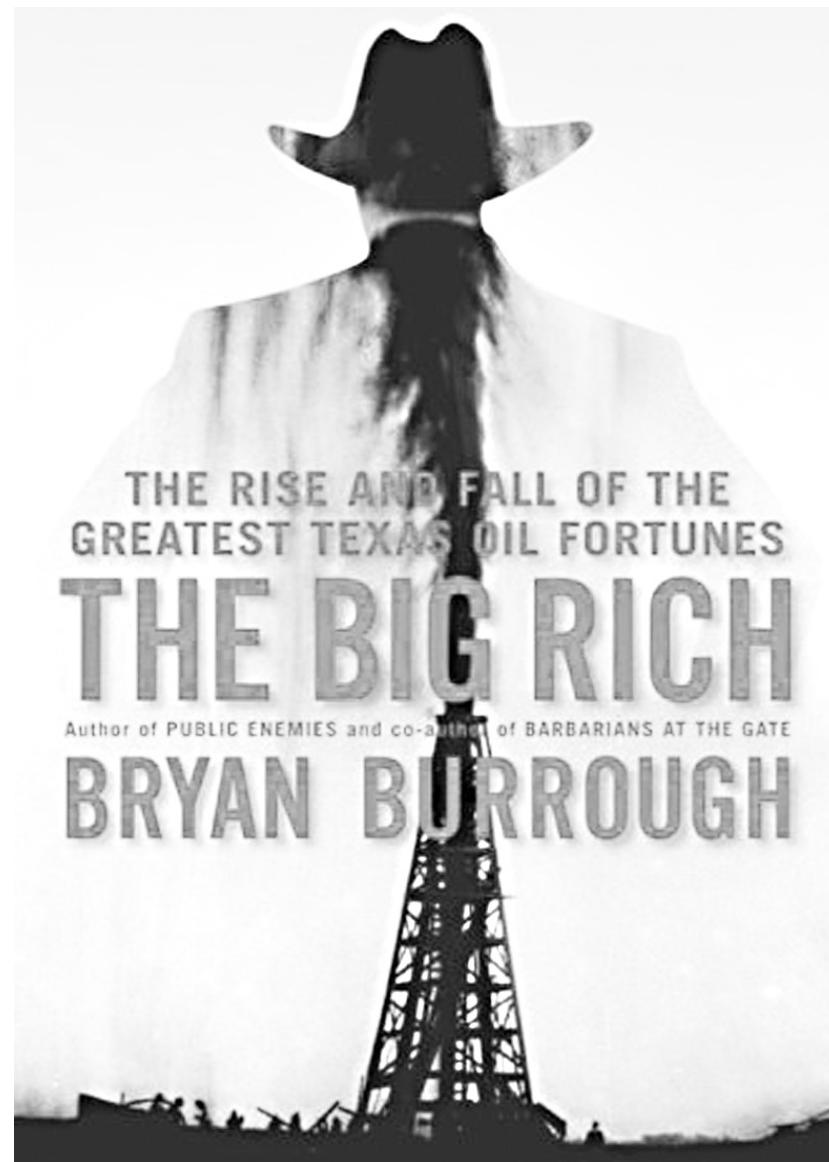
"If Texas Oil had a Mount Rushmore, their faces would adorn it," Burrough writes in his book that is as exhaustive as it is well-grounded. "A good ol' boy. A scold. A genius. A bigamist. Known in their heyday as the Big Four, they became the founders of the greatest Texas family fortunes."

Hugh Roy Cullen of Houston, a 5th-grade dropout, used to be a cotton buyer. He made his oil fortune by drilling deep where others would not: mud, saltwater and the edges of fields already tapped.

Clint Murchison of Dallas, a banker's son "saddled with the body of a snowman – big head, beanbag nose, no neck to speak of – and a face like a dish of melted ice cream" was the most innovative in the oil-drilling business by doing what he called "finaglin."

Of the four, Hunt was perhaps the strangest and craziest. He declared that he was breast-fed until age 7 and showed extraordinary skills in arithmetic. Hunt could multiply a series of large sums in his head as a boy. He once worked as a sugar cane farmhand, drove mules and toiled as a lumberjack. He made his fortune by buying out a wildcatter who hit a pool of East Texan oil that proved to be 45 miles long.

The oil billionaires wore billions as bow ties and rode pet lions. One day, Hunt's wife Lyda learned that her husband had secretly kept another woman,



with whom he had four children. "Daddy always said that his genes were so outstanding that he wanted to leave a lot of them to the world," Lyda so told her daughter Margaret. When Hunt passed away in 1974, Hunt left behind 13 children born with three women.

The oil billionaires were indeed people who were in possession of extraordinary talents, and their optimism was well-known. When Cullen came home from drilling one too many dry holes, he would

simply said, "tomorrow's another day." Murchison had his own philosophy on life. "If you're gonna owe money, owe more than you can pay. Then the people can't afford foreclosure," he said. The wisdom of this statement can be truly found in today's America that is spending more than it earns with huge deficits.

"Texas oil, and to a degree the Big Four families, brought true national power to the state, and it's a power America grapples with to this day," Burrough concludes.

Power of love in words

By He Jianwei

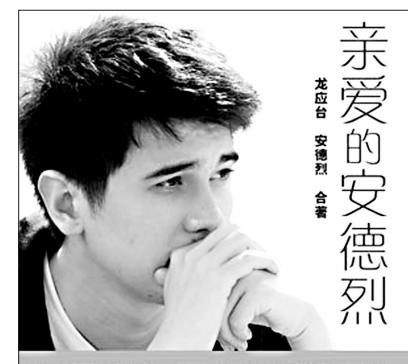
Lung's son was 14 when she accepted Taipei's appointment as its first "Minister of Culture" in 1999. Four years later, when she left her position, she found it hard to communicate with her 18-year-old, who grew up in Germany.

There was a wall between them, not only because of the generational gap, but because they were from different countries and cultures. To better know her son, Lung asked if he would like to collaborate on a column in the form of emails.

He agreed.

Their letters began to run in newspapers in 2004. Lung released their collection in *Dear Andreas* (288pp, People's Literature Publishing House, 26 yuan) on the Chinese mainland at the end of last year. It also came off the press in Taiwan and Hong Kong.

"I never thought it could be published or get so many readers. I had only one idea: maybe I could break into the world of an



18, and contrasted it with what her son did and thought. She knew the village where she grew up taught her nothing but sympathy, but what was a complex Web of information teaching her son?

Through 30 letters, readers can see clearly the gap between their generations, and the cultural divide between East and West. But her words betray a mutual love left unexpressed.

Many modern families find it difficult to communicate, Lung said. In the modern world, family members take for granted that they love each other. "Love has become an excuse for non-communication," she wrote.

When Lung and her son's letters were published in the newspaper, many parents photocopied them to give to their children. They helped parents and children to break the ice.

"Our letters are like a light at sea in the dark, and ships looking for a port found it," she wrote.

Pan Macmillan Asia book listing

Pan Macmillan Asia recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers. Find them at the Bookworm, Chaterhouse or Beijing Foreign Language Bookstore.

Chosen

By P.C. Cast and Kristin Cast, 320pp, St. Martin's Griffin, US \$8.95

It is the third installment of the House of Night series, called a "highly addictive series" by Romantic Times, a New York book reviewer. Dark forces are at work at the House of Night and fledgling vampire Zoey Redbird's adventures at the school take a mysterious turn. In this book, her mettle will be tested as never before. Zoey's best friend Stevie Rae is undead and struggling to maintain a grip on her humanity. She has no clue how to help her, and speaking of rare, Zoey finds herself in the very unexpected and rare position of having three boyfriends.



Path of Glory

By Jeffrey Archer, 384pp, Macmillan, GB £18.99

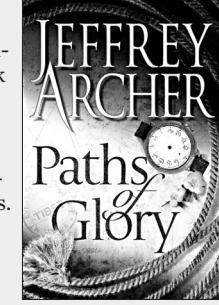
Some people have dreams that are so magnificent that their place in history would be guaranteed ... if only they could achieve them. But what if one man had such a dream, and once he'd fulfilled it there was no proof? George Mallory once told an American reporter that he wanted to climb Mt. Everest, "because it's there." On his third attempt in 1924, at age 37, he was last seen 182 meters from the summit. His body was found in 1999, and it remains a mystery whether he reached the summit. This extraordinary novel may help readers decide whether or not George Mallory's name should be added to the list of legends.



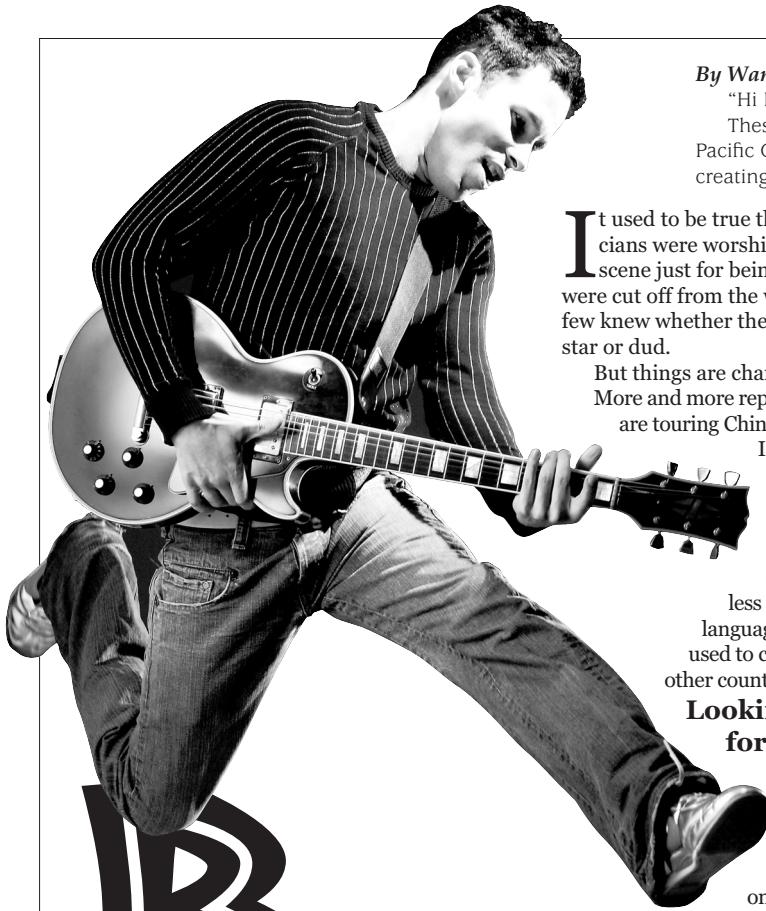
Factory Girls

By Leslie T. Chang, 432pp, Picador, GB £17.99

Leslie T. Chang gives an eye-opening first look into the everyday lives of migrant factory workers. Chang, a former Beijing correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal*, tells the story of these workers through the lives of two young women, whom she follows over the course of three years as they attempt to rise from the assembly lines of Dongguan, an industrial city in the Pearl River Delta.



(By Zhang Dongya)



By Wang Yu

"Hi Phil, I've attached a new clip with this mail. Hope it plays."

These correspondences are commonplace when Chinese and American musicians work across the Pacific Ocean to develop new songs. New technology has not only made communication easier, but it is creating new outlets for new bands to promote themselves.

It used to be true that foreign musicians were worshipped in the local scene just for being foreign. Fans were cut off from the world beat, and few knew whether the new face was a star or dud.

But things are changing. More and more reputable artists are touring China, and widespread

Internet use is filling an information gap. The new generation of young musicians and fans is less hindered by the language barrier, which used to cut off fans from other countries.

Looking online for inspiration

Wu Wenzhe, a young jazz singer and pianist, went to Rome to work on her three-year

a music environment much more developed than our own. You can always find new ideas from others with different cultural backgrounds," she said.

Volunteer agents

Young rockers on the other side of the world are eager to emulate Wu's success.

To promote their music in China, British band Exile Parade's new single is now free for download on many popular music blogs. A Douban.com group for the band will distribute free CDs to 10 of its members as a gift once the disc comes out in the UK.

Both promotions were organized by their fans in China: Zhu Yanfeng, a TV director, and Li Xiachen, a blogger on MusicInStyle.

"I first found the band on MySpace in 2007 The band contacted me and sent me their demos. At that time, they were just newcomers," Zhu said. He soon wrote an article about the band for IndieRay.com, a reputable music Web site, but it did not get much attention.

"It's nothing to do with business, we just like the band," Zhu said. "Once I get

Records when we realized there was a lack of trans-Pacific music distribution. There is a lot of wonderful music in China that we feel Americans would appreciate. The reverse is also true, with exciting indie rock bands in the US that don't get the chance to spread their music to China," Kottle said.

A US band and some south China groups are on its client list.

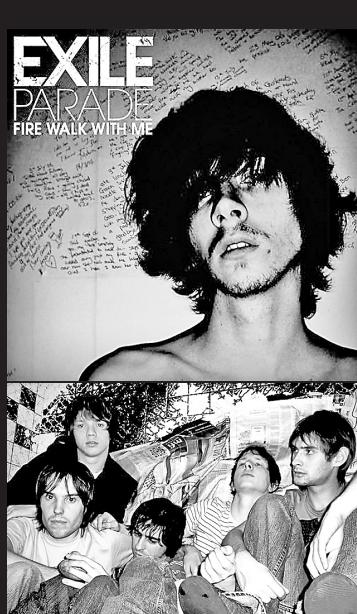
But these groups need more than someone to translate their Web pages. Promotion is essential to making any label work. As the founder of IndieRay.com, Li has many contacts within the scene to help US bands crack the China market.

"Since the iTunes Store doesn't work in China, I'm also looking for an online music sales platform to cooperate with us on promotions," Li said.

"It's easy to let people know and like the band. But it's not enough. The band told me that they are willing to come at their own expense, and I still think they need to release their records here," Zhu said.

Bands like Exile Parade, who are

Breaking down the music barrier



Exile Parade will release their first album this year. The group is a newcomer to Britain's top list.

MBA after graduating from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. She began playing piano at age seven, and built a reputation as the pianist and lead singer of Azure Forest at college.

Though she performed on TV show and in local clubs and was a long-time fan of Western music, the singer was still looking to contact foreign musicians and became one of China's first MySpace users.

"I first heard of the site in 2003, but I didn't add my own page until 2007. Before that, I was just following the artists who made good music and learning from them," Wu said.

Young independent musicians are using MySpace, Facebook and other social networking Web sites to connect with overseas music communities. Wu has already cooperated with artists from the US, Italy and New Zealand.

"One of my songs was produced by an American musician. I was inspired by one of his samples and wrote lyrics and a melody for it. I recorded it the night before Christmas Eve and sent it back to him as a present," Wu said.

"These foreign musicians grew up in

their new CDs, I'll do what I can to help promote them on TV or the radio," he said.

This year's promotion started last month and was part of an effort to win more fans in China. The results were astounding: "Total page views on the Web sites broke 6,000," Li said.

Exile Parade said they hope to build a large enough audience to one day tour here.

From niche to business?

Tony Li was one of China's first music bloggers. He is now working on a new cooperation with Stuart Kottle, a former US student at Tsinghua University. The two have partnered to start Yi Records, a promotional project for musicians in their countries.

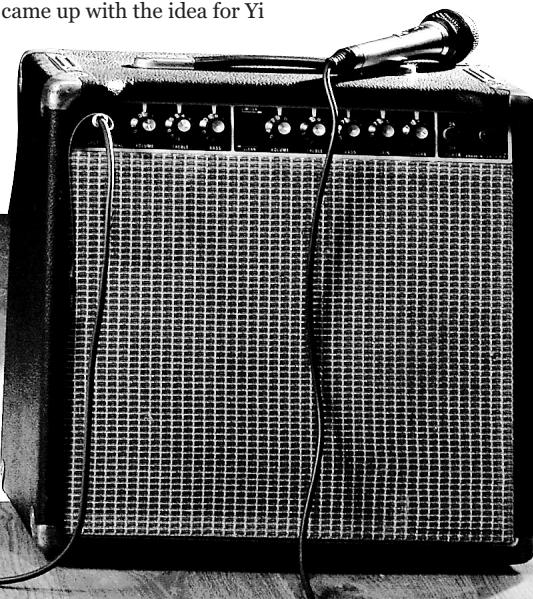
Yi Records helps Chinese musicians to build English pages on MySpace and helps American bands to set up Chinese groups on douban.com.

"We came up with the idea for Yi

rising to the top in Britain, a country with a well-built music industry, need more than online promotions. The British band's manager once asked Zhu to be their publicist in China. "Even though I have my own label, it's more a hobby than a career. I'd rather leave professional artists to native record labels," Zhu said.

A real business requires more than ideas. Yi Records will be registered in the US and Tony Li and Kottle plan to charge their American clients in the future. "Now we hope to sign 10 bands and see how it works. I have my own job, and Stuart works at an economic think tank in Washington DC. We don't have much funding but the project doesn't need much," Li said.

The music scene is full of experimentation, and Li sees his record label as just another part of it.



CFP Photo

**An apartment garden**

Fiona Lee, a student at the Communication University of China, started home-gardening a year ago.

Lee, who was born in Hong Kong, raised in California and has been living in Beijing for a year and a half, rents an apartment in Sihuidong. Her place is cozy, but the trouble is it's close to a chemical plant, which pollutes the air in her neighborhood. Instead of buying an expensive air purifier however, Lee decided to fill her apartment with greenery – a move inspired by her parents who grow plants at home.

"The air has gotten so much better with the plants," Lee, said.

Taking residency in her terrace are basil, strawberries, peppers, lemons, carrots and water spinach. Some she bought from the Laitai Flower Market and others she grew from seeds.

After a year of gardening, Lee discovered that plants from the market were not very healthy: either their leaves yellowed and they eventually died or they developed diseases, but those she planted herself grew healthily.

Lee uses organic gardening techniques. She gives her plants leftover water from boiling vegetables; and she uses coffee grounds and her goldfish's waste as fertilizer.

Lee finds home-gardening fun, especially since it helps her recycle things she would ordinarily throw away. For instance, she is planning to use leftover disposable chopsticks to build a trellis for her cucumbers.

Although Lee has two part-time jobs on top of her schoolwork, she has managed to find time for her plants. "I guess if you really enjoy doing something, you will always find time for it," she said.

Laitai Flower Market

A gardener's delight: Plants, seeds, soil, fertilizers and pots are readily available here.

Where: 9 Maizidian Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

By Annie Wei

The season has arrived for "greening" the home. And it doesn't hurt that US First Lady Michelle Obama gave the idea a boost by announcing last week the White House's new vegetable garden.

Spring *greening* at home



- 1 Fiona Lee, from the US, with her Lemon tree
- 2 This just looks like dirt, but it's another one of Lee's DIY fertilizer projects. She composts by drying up coffee grounds and tea leaves on a tray that sits out in the sun. Then she mashes them up and mixes them into the soil with some eggshells.
- 3 One-week old cilantro seedlings
- 4 Baby carrots
- 5 Rosemary plant
- 6 Pepper plants from last year
- 7 Every garden needs a source of fertilizer. This is Lee's four goldfish, a great source of fertilizer, nourishing this hydroponic plant.

Photos by Fiona Lee

Earthworms for composting

The New York Times last month ran a story about urban residents creating earthworm composts in their small kitchens. Beijing has a group of volunteers doing the same thing.

Han Baisheng and his team, from the China Association of Social Workers' No. 5 Volunteer Department, introduced to retirees this spring the concept of raising earthworms. As of this month, 20 families in Xuanwu District's Chunshu Community are already involved in the initiative. Han said his group's next target will be a community in Xicheng District.

Individuals or groups, whether they are local or foreign, are welcome to join the program, Han said. Interested parties can send Han an email through weiyi@ynet.com.

How to buy wisely from flower markets

Many people who have purchased plants from flower markets are familiar with this scenario: The plants look healthy at the market, their leaves green and shiny, but end up dying a few weeks later.

Here are some tips to ensure a longer-lasting relationship between gardeners and the star of their gardens:

1. Pay attention to a plant's roots. Some roots have soil clinging to them, while others do not. Generally, roots with soil attached live longer. Vendors know this, so some of the unscrupulous ones artificially attach soil to the roots. Shake the plant to see if the soil drops away. If it does, the buyer's best bet is to step back and find another stall.

2. Do not pick plants covered in blossoms or those full of fruits. Normally,

plants with too many flowers or fruits have just arrived from the greenhouse. Vendors usually hurriedly replant them and spray on chemicals to make them look fresh. Such plants die soon after purchase.

3. Some dishonest vendors will stick a rootless plant into a pot and offer it to customers. To avoid falling for this trick, lift up the plant by its main stem and see if the plant and pot stay attached. A healthy plant will stay in its pot.

4. In general, small pots result in small plants. If a big plant is housed in a tiny pot, it likely was not grown there – it is not its normal, healthy environment.

5. Do not buy a pot with three different kinds of flowers. The container is not big enough to support the nutrients that three types of plants need. Plants in such a setup die quickly; they must have been replanted only a day or two ago.

How to get rid of plant diseases:

Cigarette butts: Add 10 portions of water to the cigarette butts and soak them overnight. Dilute the water, then spray it on the plants. This can get rid of budworms and red spiders.

Chinese red pepper: Add 10 portions of water to the peppers, then boil the mixture until only half of the water is left. Add 10 portions of water, then spray on plants to keep away whiteflies, budworms and scale insects. Chili peppers can be substituted for the Chinese red peppers.

Vinegar: Add five to six portions of water to regular white vinegar, then spray it on plants every three days to repel scale insects.

Taiwan Nouvelle

By Annie Wei

Everyone who has visited Taiwan comes back with stories of an amazing dining experience. The island is a melting pot of different Chinese regional groups and a land rich with culinary ingredients, resulting in a cuisine unparalleled in flavor.

But in Beijing, it is not easy to find a Taiwanese restaurant that satisfies a gourmet's taste buds. Many so-called "Taiwanese restaurants" do not put their money where the mouth is.

Then enters Kitchen 4, which finally brings joy to diners looking for a good Taiwanese meal. It is a sister-restaurant of Kitchen 88 in Shanghai owned by some Hong Kong and Taiwan movie stars.

Kitchen 4 wants to promote not only authentic, but healthy, Taiwan cuisine. Therefore, all its dishes are MSG-free and have "less salt." To maintain food quality, the restaurant brought in four chefs from Taiwan and Shanghai. And every time man-

agers fly back to the island, they bring back bags of ingredients to make sure their dishes reflect true Taiwan flavor.

Recommended typical Taiwanese dishes are sour plum turnip (22 yuan) and Taiwan sausage (28 yuan). Shrimp tossed with wasabi and pine nuts (48 yuan), with shrimps fully covered in wasabi, is a must-try.

The Singapore Hainanese chicken (38 yuan small; 69 yuan big) is also worth going for. Many customers, even women on a diet, can easily finish two bowls of the rice boiled in chicken stock.

Kitchen 4's original creations like garlic stew stir-fried with minced port and century egg (38 yuan) and coffee sauce pork ribs with coffee bean (58 yuan) are good choices as well.

As for drinks, fresh soursop juice imported from Singapore (35 yuan) is highly recommended. The juice can become a wee bit sweet, so you can ask for more lemon in the drink.

A huge number of diners, as well as local

celebrities in the entertainment and media industries, have already flocked to Kitchen 4. To cope with the lunchtime crowd, the restaurant offers business set meals, which cost 25 to 38 yuan and include a bowl of rice, soup and two dishes.

Kitchen 4 plans to introduce traditional Taiwanese snacks soon; it will stay open late into the night in the summer to offer customers red bean ice, mango ice and ice smoothies.

Where: 1/F Building 4, Jianwai Soho, 39 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11:30 am - 10 pm

Tel: 5869 2149

Cost: Starting from 50 yuan per person



Soursop juice



Left: Sliced and chopped veggies with dry tofu
Right: Shrimp tossed with wasabi and pine nuts Photos by Zhao Jingwei

MSG-free indulgence

By Annie Wei

Our world is becoming more health-conscious by the day. In a country notorious for MSG-laden food, an increasing number of diners in Beijing are wishing restaurants would stop using MSG, and would put less salt in their food. This week, Beijing Today sent reporters to check out two new dining places and one popular Chinese restaurant that pride themselves in serving tasty, MSG-free food.



Cold sweet beans



Mixed grain rice milk



Cold tofu and century-eggs

Home-style Beijing dishes to the core

By Venus Lee

It is not easy to find another place that makes home-style Beijing dishes as mouthwatering as Fumanyuan. Although the restaurant looks ordinary, it draws diners from all over town.

Braised ribbonfish in brown sauce (40 yuan) and stewed spareribs and kidney beans (29 yuan) are its signature dishes. The fish is braised to just the right texture, and combines sweet, salty and spicy. The stewed pork ribs are tender, and its soy flavor is addictive.

"All our dishes are cooked with fresh, rich soy sauce instead of excessive oil and spices, which is why our dishes taste different and are not greasy," Ding Yitian, the owner of the restaurant, said.

Besides the meat dishes, patrons also like Fumanyuan's sour and hot potato shreds and fried bok-choy cabbage, both of which cost 12 yuan per order. This is an affordable place to eat as most dishes cost between 10 and 50 yuan.



The restaurant's only shortcoming is its cramped space. It only has 15 square tables which can accommodate about 40 customers. It has very simple decor, but is clean.

During mealtimes, there is always a queue of people by the entrance, waiting for a seat. But apparently, people who eat leave soon after. "Our guests are mainly return customers who leave immediately after a meal, instead of sitting around and chatting. We have already made an agreement with them," Ding said.

Fumanyuan restaurant

Where: 10 Xinyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6461 8656

Cost: Starting from 20 yuan per person

From top to bottom:
Eggplant and pork
Sour and hot potato threads
Potato threads and two other dishes cost less 100 yuan

Photos by Yu Tingmei

Health secret in grains made yummy

By Zhang Dongya

People nowadays eat too much processed food. Coarse grains like maize and millet may not be people's top food choice, but they are nutritious and contribute to a balanced diet. And this is the food group in which Slim Taste Noodle Restaurant is building its name. A small eatery with a healthy-eating philosophy, Slim Taste offers fine and coarse grain and other food high in fiber, low in fat, low in calories and free of MSG.

The restaurant, owned by the Hong Kong-based West Dragon Group, opened its first Beijing branch last December.

To maintain quality, Slim Taste sources most of its ingredients from Hong Kong.

One of the restaurant's specialties is purple rice noodles: Purple rice and flour are mixed to create the noodles, then they are served in various dishes like plain noodles in special Sichuan hot soup (20 yuan) and diced beef with noodle soup (25 yuan), adapted from Nanjing.

Slim Taste serves stir-fried rice with coarse grains like red rice and purple rice, which are rich in dietary fiber. Red rice with garlic shrimps in lotus leaf is highly recommended (38 yuan).

Its cold dishes are also worth

trying. The jellyfish and cucumber (23 yuan) is reasonably priced, considering the jellyfish is shipped all the way from Hong Kong.

The restaurant's most popular orders have to be its distinctive beverages made from soybean and rice: Purple soybean milk, black soybean milk, organic soybean milk, mixed grain rice milk. It offers a wide range of teas and Hong Kong-style drinks as well. All beverages are available hot or cold, and cost from 9 to 16 yuan.

Slim Taste has also created "healthy desserts": Purple rice pudding (15 yuan for two pieces), sweet

osmanthus pudding (15 yuan for two pieces) and fresh fruit tea jelly are not only yummy, but they will not make you feel guilty for indulging.

Beside the restaurant is a shop selling rice rolls. Each roll's nutritional information is provided, so the health-conscious need not worry.

Slim Taste Noodle Restaurant

Where: S9-32 The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am - 11 pm

Tel: 6415 9699

Cost: Starting from 20 yuan per person

Photos by Yu Tingmei

Music from the land of mermaids

By Zheng Lu

The Copenhagen Girls' Choir, a renowned musical group from the "homeland of mermaids," will perform here for the first time tomorrow. Forty choir girls ages 13 to 17 will sing more than 20 songs at the Forbidden City Concert Hall.

Since its establishment in 1979, the choir has joined numerous international concerts and singing festivals. The girls have performed throughout Europe, North America and countries like Israel, Greenland and South Africa. Princess Benedikte of Denmark took special interest in the group and became its main patron in 2005.

The members are students from Grades 6 to 9 at Sankt Annae College, and practice four to six hours each week. Made up of a total 130 girls, the group usually performs with 30 to 60 voices. Every year,

the school selects 33 8-year-old girls based on their vocal quality and musical talent. They are taught to sing and read music for the next three years until they can join the choir.

"We work and practice hard to achieve good results, but without talent even our highly competent teachers cannot do anything," said Claus Vestergaard Jensen, the choir's conductor who also composes music for the group.

Composers like Knut Nystedt, Ib Norholm and Svend S. Schultz have also written songs for the group.

The choir is characterized by its homogenous sound, resulting partly from the fact that the members are of the same age. Apart from singing classics by composers such as Gabriel Faure and Johannes Brahms, the group focuses on popular music. It has already recorded 12 CDs, with a new one on the way.



5 Friday, March 27

Exhibition

Posture – Wu Jianjun Solo Exhibition

Where: Fine Gallery, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 30, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9257

Nightlife

Battles, P.K.14, Bigger Bang@MAO

Where: MAO Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 120 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080

Long Shen Dao Reggae Dance Party

Where: The Star Live, 3/F, 79 Hep-



ingli Xi Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 80 yuan

Tel: 6425 5677

Pitchtuner

Where: Yugong Yishan, 3 Zhangzizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: 9 pm

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 6404 2711



Movie

The Thirteenth Floor

Where: 1905 Movie Club, B2, 6 Xiangjun Bei Li, Dongsanhuai Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: 10 yuan

Tel: 6591 8189

7 Sunday, March 29

Exhibition

Kang Young Kil's Solo Exhibition

Where: Space I, Gallery Artside Beijing, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 22, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9192

Lee Seung Hee's Solo Exhibition

Where: Space II, Gallery Artside Beijing, Area D, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 21, daily except Monday, 10 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5978 9192

Poijing Time Contemporary Art Exhibition

Where: New Millennium Gallery, 3818 Warehouse, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 30, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 4122

Movie

The Last Emperor

Where: Pin+Space, 1020 (1/F), Building 10 Jianwai SOHO, 39 Dongsanhuai Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 6:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5869 3500

Nightlife

Metal Music Festival

Where: Haoyun Bar, 1 Xingba Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9 am

Admission: 50 yuan

Tel: 8448 3335

6 Saturday, March 28

Exhibition

Breathing – Guo Qi Solo Exhibition

Where: Dandeli Art Space, Building 1, 3 Guangqu Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until May 7, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6770 8966

Something to do with Nature

Where: Triumph Art Space, A-05, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until April 12, 10 am – 4 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9639

Movie

Yesenia

Where: Jinji Baihua Cinema, 22 Beisanhuan Dong Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 9:30 am

Admission: 10 yuan

Tel: 6420 7759

Nightlife

Ben Sherman X Zuoyou Band

Where: Ben Sherman, S2-13 The Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6415 0593



Hedgehog – Blue Day Dreaming

Where: MAO Live House, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 60 yuan

Tel: 6402 5080



Upcoming

Exhibition

Contemporary oil painting exhibition

Where: Qin Gallery, 1-1E Hua Wei Li (north of Beijing Curio City), Chaoyang District

When: April 1-30, 9:30 am – 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8779 0461

Stage in April

Concert

China Philharmonic Orchestra

2008-2009 Music Festival

Who: Conducted by Paul Meyer Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-680 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Xue Wei Violin Recital

Where: National Grand Theater Concert Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

When: April 17, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-500 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

Taking the Road Beijing Concert 2009

Who: Jonathan Lee, Wakin Chou, A Yue and Lo Tayu Where: Beijing Workers Gymnasium, Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: April 18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 280-1,680 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Chanson Concert

Who: William Sheller Where: Zhongshan Music Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), Dongcheng District

When: April 19, 7:30 pm

Admission: 30-380 yuan

Tel: 6559 8306

Bertrand Chamayou Piano Recital

Where: Beijing University Centennial Memorial Hall, 116 Zhongguancun Bei Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 25, 7 pm

Admission: 80-150 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Mantovani Orchestra China Tour – Beijing Concert

Where: Poly Theater, 14 Dongzhimen Nan Dajie, Chaoyang District

When: April 28-29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 6501 1854

Dance

Juliette Binoche and Akram Khan

Where: Mei Lanfang Grand Theater, 48 Hepingli Dajie, Xicheng District

When: April 3-5, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-1,280 yuan

Tel: 5833 1218

Oliver Twist

Who: British TNT Theater Where: Beijing University Centennial Memorial Hall, 116 Zhongguancun Bei Dajie, Haidian District

When: April 17-19, 7 pm

Admission: 80-200 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Opera

Tosca

Who: Directed by Lang Kun Where: National Grand Theater Opera Hall (west side of the Great Hall of the People), Xicheng District

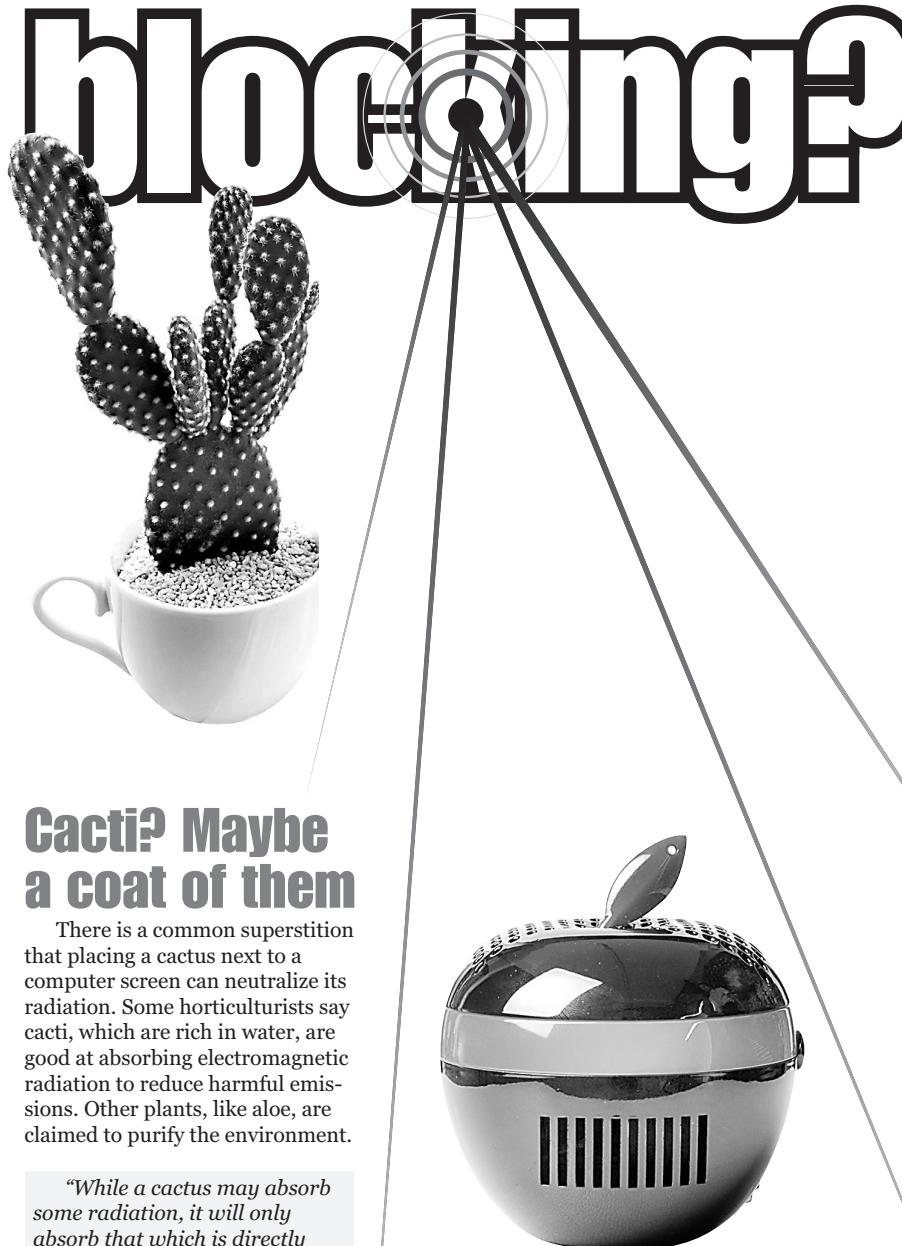
When: April 15-18, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By Jackie Zhang)

Is office radiation worth blocking?



Cacti? Maybe a coat of them

There is a common superstition that placing a cactus next to a computer screen can neutralize its radiation. Some horticulturists say cacti, which are rich in water, are good at absorbing electromagnetic radiation to reduce harmful emissions. Other plants, like aloe, are claimed to purify the environment.

"While a cactus may absorb some radiation, it will only absorb that which is directly focused at it. Unless you decide to drape yourself in cacti, the plants won't do anything for your free radicals," Bao said.

Purifiers won't suck up waves

One gadget, the "PC mate air purifier," claims it can trap and destroy dust, bacteria and smoke, and it will help negate static and radiation emissions.

It claims it uses an activated carbon filter with highly-concentrated negative ion and strong turbine to purify harmful air.

"It might work as an air-cleaner, but claims that it can 'suck up' PC radiation are dubious at best," Bao said.

Safer than people believe

Workers and researchers like Bao who are exposed to excessive radiation are required to wear professional shields made from material like lead. But Bao said the amount of radiation to which most people are exposed is negligible.

"There is a superstitious fear of radiation with no scientific basis. There are standards for how much radiation objects can emit, and I can guarantee that everything we encounter in daily life is safe and healthy. The radiation of all products – even computers and cell phones –

is tolerably safe," Bao said.

He said they never wear radiation-proof suits after hours. "Nowadays, most computers are attached to an LCD screen, which are much less radioactive than the old (CRT) monitors," he said.

As for radiation-proof maternity clothes, most people say it is better than nothing. "Since the medical field has not published any conclusive studies on computer or cell phone use, it's hard to say whether these have any value," Bao said.

By Zhang Dongya

Computers are an essential part of most jobs today, and their users are understandably concerned about radioactive contamination.

Office ladies are notorious for their fear of computer use, and a whole array of products has been introduced to prey on their fears and superstitious ways to combat the evils of modern technology. From donning lead-fiber clothing and masks to dotting their desk with cacti, it's obvious that some basics of the technological revolution have gone unexplained.

Do any of these remedies work, or is someone making a profit on a white collar placebo? Bao Jiali, a professor and researcher at the bio-electromagnetics lab at Zhejiang University has some answers about office radiation.



CFP Photo

Masking a problem

The radiation mask is a spin-off of radiation-proof maternity clothes. The mask covers the entire face, leaving only the eyes and nostrils uncovered. Office ladies who work by the PC all day believe the machine is the cause of their acne and freckles.

The masks are advertised as using radiation-absorbing materials, and as able to filter out 90 percent of all harmful radiation.

Many office ladies use the masks, which cost 30 to 40 yuan, and wear them to work. Apparently bearing a striking

resemblance to something out of *Silence of the Lambs* is better than having a blemish.

However, experts like Professor Bao said the masks cannot work. "For one thing, the mask is not closed like it should be. Any professional radiation shield must be fully closed," he said.

Bao likened putting the mask on your face to putting a rock in the middle of the stream: the back of the rock still gets wet, and electromagnetic waves will find the same way around a front-only mask.

"The material is also questionable. Metal fibers can effectively block radiation, but it's hard to guarantee the quality of something like that in a 30-yuan mask," Bao said.

Ways to fight radiation

Like fighting against the viruses and diseases, the most effective way to combat radiation is to **strengthen your own body**. Besides exercising, you can also drink more tea and eat more fruits and vegetables.

Tea is rich in polyphenols, which can bind to radioactive substances and remove them from your system. Lemon tea, chrysanthemum tea and green tea work the best.

Also, more **vitamins** can help protect you from radiation. Eat more fruits and vegetables instead of relying on tablets.

Try to keep a **distance** of 30 centimeters from your monitor at all times, and use an LCD screen instead of an old-style CRT. Wash your face after using the machine for extended periods.

A relaxing, rustic holiday



Many tourists visit Tahiti Village for its waterfalls.

Buddhist village in Gouya

Close to Deshengkou Reservoir in Shisanling, Changping District, is Gouya Natural Scenic Spot, which contains a holiday village called "Tahiti."

The village, about 40 kilometers from downtown, is located between two mountains. Visitors get a full view of the mountains from the village yard. In the distance, wooden cabins can be seen dotting the mountain slopes.

Although trees in the lowlands might just be turning green in March, in the mountains, the peach trees are already in full bloom.

Villagers say that almond trees bloom soon after the peach trees, followed by cherry trees in May. It is the best season for fruit-picking.

Xie Chenguang, a Beijinger who stayed in one of the mountain cabins with friends last weekend, said there is a Buddhist village in the area which offers tourists interesting activities.

The village was established by a monk called Longzang about four years ago, and has more than 10 cabins and a hall for worshipping Buddha.

Longzang was once a successful businessman in Changping. After joining the religious order a few years ago in Wutai Mountain, one of the country's major Buddhist centers in Shanxi Province, he returned to his hometown and built a Buddhist village.

"Buddhist studies and yoga are held every Saturday and Sunday afternoon. Vegetarian food is provided during the activities," Xie said.

After the activities are finished, sometimes Longzang will play piano and sing Buddhist songs, Xie said. "All is quiet but the sound of singing. It was a wonderful opportunity to cultivate moral character and develop temperance," he said.

Another place to enjoy peace and relaxation in Tahiti is a tea shed by the brook on the village

outskirts. While sipping tea under the shed, visitors will feel like they are on a boat at sea.

When night falls, barbecue stands appear to feed ravenous tourists. In the village courtyard, people sit against a large walnut tree while eating grilled food like chicken wings, seafood and vegetables.

The local specialty is mutton chops. Since the dish needs to be pickled 24 hours before grilling, customers need to order it at least a day in advance. Travelers who stay more than a day should



give it a try.

Getting there:

Drive along Badaling Highway, then take Changpingxiguan Exit. Go into National Highway 110 to reach Deshengkou Reservoir.

Tel: 6076 2299

By Jin Zhu

Springtime in Beijing is a fantastic travel season. From March to May is a period of mild sunshine and gentle breezes, and of trees and flowers bursting back to life: a great time to be outdoors.

Doing yoga out in the open, touching ancient stones, living in a castle with foreign influences ... These are just some of the things travelers can do with family, friends or a lover on a one or two-day trip in the suburbs.



The Buddhist Village in Tahiti offers peace and relaxation.

Photos provided by Tahiti



Continued on page 21...

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Courtyard in U-dragon Manor

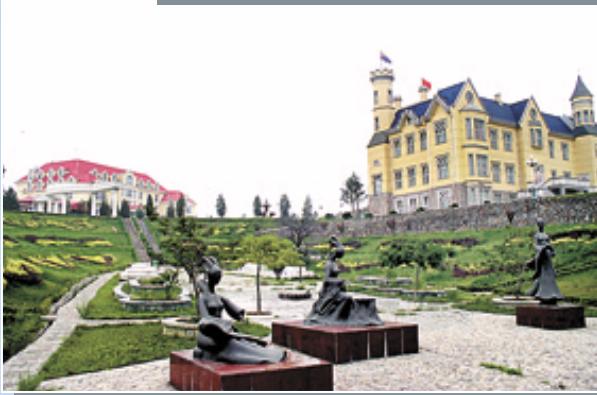


Visitors to Xianweng Village make zongzi, dumplings wrapped in reed leaves.

Photo provided by Xianweng Village



Visitors get to experience the life of the royal family in the Imperial Palace.



Australian manor in U-dragon



U-dragon Manor is composed of two buildings in different architectural styles.

Photos provided by U-dragon Manor

Life in an imperial palace

The Bailongtan Scenic Area is located in Longtan Mountain, near the Great Wall's Yanshan stretch in Miyun County, about 100 kilometers from the city center.

In addition to natural scenery, the area has compounds that date back to the Song Dynasty called the Imperial Palace. Emperors and court officials often went to Bailongtan to escape the busy capital.

Each compound has houses built around a courtyard, and also contains pavilions, galleries and a garden. Halls derive their names from the imperial court.

The place is now offering accommodations. "Visitors to the Imperial Palace will receive excellent service, and get to experience the life of the royal family," Li Zhiwei, the manager, said.

About 13 kilometers north of Bailongtan is an Australian manor and winery recently built for tourists. Called U-dragon Manor, it is composed of two buildings in different architectural styles.

Visitors can pick fruits in the manor's big vineyard, and learn how to make wine from its staff.

Getting there: Take the Jingcheng Highway to its last exit, then take National Highway 110 to U-dragon Manor.

Tel: 6904 1023

Village of stone castles

The first natural scenic spot open to the public in Huairou District is Shentangyu, about 60 kilometers from the downtown. It possesses beautiful landscapes and includes a portion of the ancient Great Wall with strangely shaped stones.

Because of how they look, the stones have names such as Buddha's Cap, Eagle's Mouth and Camel Humps. Along the wall is also a well-preserved fortress built for troops during the Ming Dynasty.

A 15-minute drive from Shentangyu will bring travelers to Xianweng Village, famed for its "stone castles."

"It was an entire world of stones. Rooms, staircases, even television cabinets were made of stone," Zhong Dan, a Beijinger who stayed with villagers for a weekend, said.

Tourists find it hard to leave their rooms, which include a stone sofa. But there are also disadvantages to using stones. "A stone room is not a good choice on rainy days since it becomes too damp for comfort," Li Ying, a village resident, said.

Outdoor activities in Shentangyu include sunbathing, fishing, paddling on a bamboo raft and barbecue parties at night.

Getting there: Drive along Jingcheng Highway to Exit 13, then take Fanqi Road all the way to Shentangyu.

Tel: 8961 7579

Wooden villas of relaxation

About 70 kilometers from central Beijing is Lianquanxianggu Scenic Area, in Huairou District. The place was named after the spring water that flows through the valley.

The scenic area includes Tiangong Cave, Maotou Mountain, forests and Shennong hot spring. From Heituo Mountain, the highest peak in Lianquanxianggu at an elevation of 1,895 meters, climbers can see Beijing spread out before them.

About 20 minutes by car from Lianquanxianggu is Huanghouzhen Villa, whose buildings have New Zealand influences since the Chinese owner spent some time in that country.

In the nearby mountain are red and yellow wooden villas. Through the villas' attic windows, people lying on wooden beds can look up at the stars in the sky.

Visitors can join farmers in their work in the field, and afterwards, enjoy grilled food with the locals. In the evenings, when weather permits, residents stage open-air performances.

Getting there: Drive along Jingcheng Highway, then take Shunyi Exit. Turn at Jingmi Road to Yanqi Town. Huanghouzhen Villa is another 40 kilometers.

Tel: 6161 3220

Right brain thinking

What is the importance of your right brain in your business education?

By Andy Anderson

Are you using your right brain in business? Throughout your educational career, your left brain has been challenged and developed to accurately analyze content. Is that enough to improve your business value?

No.

Local education systems, burdened by class sizes, have trained many students to survive by regurgitating existing knowledge. In the past, this may have built a skill set that would guarantee employment. However, when this traditional method is coupled with the speed of modern business and multiplied "unknown," people are left without the tools to adapt.

"Competitive advantage ... is increasingly tied to



how a firm's workforce can think outside the box, see fleeting opportunities and leverage these opportunities to design, innovate and market high-margin products and services," University of Hong Kong School of Business Professor Ali Farhoomand said.

This creativity requires a leap from left brain to right brain thinking.

The real effect of conventional teaching scares students into not asking questions by instilling a fear of classroom humiliation. Other reasons include time constraints and a lack of encouragement by the teacher.

How much do you really remember from your education? Probably not much, and that is acceptable because information, like your computer, goes obsolete. The most important aspect is not what you learn, but how you learn. The goal of the top learning institutions is to create self-motivated learners who ask smart questions, spark ideas and have the know-how to find answers.

"Teachers try to convey to students the process of scholarship so students can become problem-solvers and

researchers themselves," Marshall Brain said.

To become a self-motivated learner there are two paths: the informal and the formal approach. Informally you can start by listening to others' questions to understand their needs and what they value as important. Make a conscious effort to think of the right questions — the ones that define the topic and the framework. For the formal route, further your education through an MBA program.

As a manager, you can foster creativity by encouraging questions in your workplace. Communication between manager and staff should not be a monologue of task assignments, but a dialogue of understanding. When you are in a meeting, merely asking if there are any questions will not suffice: Use a variety of techniques.

Always reply kindly to questions. A rejecting tone can scare away staff who would ask future questions. Leave adequate time and prompt for questions throughout the presentation — don't wait for the end. Reward questions with compliments.

Morry Morgan, general manager of China's Training Firm of the Year in 2007 and 2008, said in one interview,

"We use a simple mantra, called TALK to encourage dialogue between all staff in our organization. While T stands for Tell, A for ask, and L for listen, if all staff are doing all these at once, everyone is on the same page with K, know. The ability to ask questions includes staff members in all areas of the business, and we welcome their suggestions."

In larger organizations with less face time, try to utilize all forms of communication, even feedback surveys.

A well-known example of the financial benefits of encouraging questions in the workplace is when General Motors circulated a feedback sheet to spark ideas. The finance department calculated the frequency of the word and deducted relevant costs including time, printing and other factors. The savings were astonishing! The policy was quickly adopted and "employee" was substituted.

In closing, think of Einstein's quote, "If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than five minutes."



CFP Photo

Dining

Family brunch



Take your family to City Wall Bistro and pamper them with select international delicacies and fresh seafood. Order your favorite dish at the Western and Asian-styled live cooking stations. All adults will get a glass of Mumm Champagne on arrival. Kids 12 and under can get a free brunch with one paying adult. First-timers to brunch receive a 30 percent discount F&B coupon which can be used in any of the hotel restaurants for dinner on their next visit.

Where: City Wall Bistro, Marriott Beijing City Wall, 7 Jianguomen Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: Until April 30, every Sunday, 11:30 am – 3:30 pm
Cost: 188 yuan
Tel: 5811 8255

Travel with taste



Hilton Beijing is presenting an international culinary celebration of Washoku: traditional Japanese cuisine. Kanpai to prime cuts of sashimi, together with freshly prepared sushi, delicate maki and distinctive tamaki for an ichiban dining experience.

Where: Elements, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongsanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District
When: Until March 29
Cost: 208 yuan (Sunday – Friday), 228 yuan (Saturday), subject to 15 percent surcharge
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 410

Live Buffet

Succulent lobsters, prawns, crabs and a selection of top-grade meats are grilled to perfection at the Live Buffet. Before and after your main course, choose a favorite dish

from the large array of starters, sushi, soups, desserts, a fine cheese board and delicious Haagen-Dazs ice cream.

Where: Kranzlers, Kempinski Hotel, 50 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: daily, 5:30-10 pm
Cost: 248 yuan (full buffet), 118 yuan (starter and salad), 78 yuan (dessert buffet), subject to 15 percent surcharge
Tel: 6465 3388 ext. 410

Doughnut Delights



Take a trip back to childhood and indulge your sweet tooth with delicious homemade doughnuts baked fresh every day. Scrumptious varieties include Chocolate Doughnuts, Fondant

Doughnuts, Coconut Doughnuts and Strawberry Jam Doughnuts.

Where: Cha Deli, Shangri-La Hotel, 29 Zizhuyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: Until March 31
Tel: 6841 2211 ext. 6715

New menu launching



This April, Chef Chung Fai Men, master chef of Yao Chi Restaurant, creates new dishes for his menu. Signature dishes include Steamed Eggs, white custard topped with Crab Claw and Stuffed Tiger Prawns with Spinach Sauce.

Where: Yao Chi Cantonese Restaurant, Grand Millennium Hotel, 7 Dongsanhuan Zhong Lu, Chaoyang District
Tel: 8587 6888

Tourism



Visit India 2009

The Indian government is promoting Visit India 2009 with discount incentives to foreign tourists visiting the country from April to December.

Offerings include complimentary international airfare for a traveling companion, one night's stay in a hotel, one complimentary local sightseeing tour in any one city of visit and a Rural Eco Holiday.

Hotel

New Appointment of General Manager

Atab Rivera is the next general manager of Courtyard by Marriott Beijing Northeast. He began his career with Marriott 26 years ago in Texas and moved to the Renaissance Tianjin Hotel in 2004. He has worked with several Marriott brands, including JW Marriott, Marriott and Renaissance.

Aviation

Singapore Airlines A330 upgrades business class

Singapore Airlines is unveiling its latest Business Class experience for customers traveling on regional and medium-haul routes. It will first be available on the new Airbus A330-300 aircraft. It features a new lie-flat Business Class seat with enhanced levels of comfort, privacy and functionality, the newest KrisWorld in-flight entertainment system with 1,000 on-demand options and other new cabin products.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinglish story

This column focuses on Chinglish mistakes in our daily life. If you have any experiences to share, send them to Wang Yu at wangyu2008@ynet.com.



CFP Photo

Shushu not always an uncle

By Huang Daohen

As a staff member of an English newspaper, haunted everyday by the same 26 letters, one cannot help but drown in an endless stream of words. Even a native speaker is bound to misuse or misunderstand certain words or phrases; what more a Chinese journalist writing in English, but working outside the English-speaking world.

One afternoon a couple of weeks ago, I was doing a story on teenagers who were chasing dreams of becoming a star, and interviewed Jeff Bass, a US sociologist and a visiting scholar at a local university. We met at Jeff's home and went straight to the topic while Michael, his 7-year-old son, played beside us.

Though a young professor, Jeff said he held a conservative view of children's education and opposed teenagers giving up everything to become stars, especially pop stars. "Studies should always come first," he said, adding that he would never allow little Michael to do the same.

Michael, however, showed his disagreement with angry stares at me. I realized I had inadvertently offended the little boy, and tried to win back his friendship as Jeff was taking a phone call. "Hey Mike," I said, "say uncle and I'll..."

"I'm determined to show them I can be a star. I'm not going to say uncle," Michael shouted and ran away, leaving me feeling embarrassed.

The interview ended soon after, but

Michael's outburst baffled me. I mentioned this later to an American friend David, and he burst into laughter.

In the Chinese culture, many people, myself included, will tell children, "jiao shushu" or "say uncle," to greet an adult male friend.

Apparently, it is a totally different story in English. "In US slang, 'say uncle' means, 'I give up! You win!' David said.

In children's fights, a child being held down had to say "uncle" before being allowed to get up, he said. I suddenly understood the little kid's annoyance.

This episode proves an important point for language learners: Learning a language involves being willing to make mistakes. If you are afraid of mistakes, it may be time to say uncle.

Chinglish on the way

This column aims to identify Chinglish in public areas. If you see any Chinglish signs, please send a picture of it to wangyu2008@ynet.com together with your name and address.

Fragrant and hot Marxism

By Tiffany Tan

Some foreigners must marvel at this sign, thinking that in China, even communist principles are dished out in restaurants. Well, not in this one. The restaurant is just saying that it serves Hunan cuisine – the flavor of which is known as *xiangla* or "spicy hot" – but in such a self-assured manner it's calling itself "Spicy-hot Ideology."

The second word in the sign, *zhuyi*, also translates into "principle," "doctrine," and "teachings." It also functions as the suffix "-ism" for words like

"socialism," "communism" and – you guessed it – "Marxism."

I think the sign ended up like that because of word-for-word translation from a dictionary. But you have to give it to the resto for its marketing strategy: The bright red sign with stylized flames looks attractive. Then you have the English name, which advertises a product you don't just get anywhere in the world. Many a Marxist and non-Marxist must have graced the restaurant's hallowed halls.

**Blacklist**

This is a column of words or phrases commonly misused by Chinese speakers. If you're planning to be an English teacher, reporter or employee of a multinational company, then watch out for this page each week.

Local professor: Zhu Shida

1. Transplant tourism

When you suddenly find yourself face-to-face with such a phrase, you will probably not understand what it means. The writer wished to describe the kind of tours in which travelers' main intention is to get an organ transplant in a hospital overseas. No matter how succinct you wish to be, you cannot say "transplant tourism." At the very least, so things are explained clearly, you should say, "organ transplant tours." You also have to take note of another fact: "Organ transplant tourism" refers to the business of running travel groups centered on obtaining organ transplants.

2. There is no use to sadly contemplate the past.

The sentence structure "there is no use ..." is usually expressed as, "There is no use doing something." People never say, There is no use "to do something." For instance, we say, "There is no use crying over spilled milk." You do not say, "There is no use to cry over spilled milk." So, this sentence should be, "There is no use sadly contemplating the past."

3. What's a person to do?

If you analyze this sentence carefully, you will find it clearly wrong. The linguistic logic implied in the sentence is totally Chinese. "What's a person?" cannot be combined with "to do." It should be: "What should a person do?" Or in a more complex way, it should be, "What is the thing a person should do?"

Native speaker: Penny Turner

1. Transplant tourism

I agree that if the phrase "transplant tourism" pops out at you from nowhere, you might fumble trying to understand what it means. But if the term is used in a news story or an NGO report, and the context is clear to readers, then it is acceptable. News agencies, even the World Health Organization (WHO), use the term in their reports. The language, in this case, is adapting to emerging trends in our fast-changing world.

2. There is no use to sadly contemplate the past.

The professor is right in his analysis. I think the writer stumbled in this sentence because of the insertion of the word "sadly" into the middle of the sentence. A familiar sentence structure is sometimes broken up by adjectives or adverbs that get the writer off track. If you find yourself unsure about the grammar of a sentence that "feels" familiar, see if you can take out "superfluous" words to reveal the basic structure of the sentence. That should help you see things more clearly.

3. What's a person to do?

There is nothing wrong with this sentence; it is merely a colloquial way of expressing indifference, resignation or embarrassment. It is like saying, "What am I to do?" In this sentence, the speaker refers to him- or herself in the third person; thus, the "I" becomes "person." Try to imagine a person shrugging his or her shoulders, palms up. That is the picture where you add the dialogue, "What's a person to do?"

Scene 1

(Ferris gets a tip about Al-Saleem, a terrorist leader, but loses his informant Bassam on a mission in Iraq. He talks with Hoffman about his next assignment in Jordan.)

Ferris (F): Hey, Ed.

Hoffman (H): Ferris. Christmas came early, buddy.

F: Oh, yeah? What'd I get for Christmas, Ed?

H: Well, 15 pages of this, 40 pages of that. I got, like, about 712 phone numbers that are new to us that we can strip and evaluate and amongst other things, a safe house in Amman. I've got jihadists coming and going from this place like it's happy hour at the **cathouse** (1). You gotta see this place.

F: Before we get into that, I wanna know what you're doing for Bassam's

Movie of the week

Ridley Scott rarely misses when he is directing war scenes, and *Body of Lies* is another success. This time, the theme is the Middle East and terrorism. Leonardo DiCaprio and Russell Crowe star together for the first time since *The Quick and the Dead* (1995), when Crowe was an unknown and DiCaprio was the latest heartthrob. Mark Strong also shines in his performance.

The movie follows a CIA spy stationed in the Middle East. But the plot is far more complex than its title would suggest. How do people live in a "dangerous area" and who actually control the situation? The movie manages to deliver answers without breaking the genre.

Synopsis

CIA operative Roger Ferris (DiCaprio) uncovers evidence that a major terrorist leader may be operating out of Jordan. He enlists the aid of CIA veteran Ed Hoffman (Russell Crowe) in infiltrating the elusive saboteur's vast underground network. During the course of his dangerous mission, Ferris gradually comes to question how much he can trust his presumed allies. Questions mount not against Hoffman, but also the outwardly helpful head of Jordanian intelligence.

**Vocabulary**

1. **cathouse:** slang for whorehouse
2. **outrank somebody:** to be in a higher position

3. **run-of-the-mill:** unremarkable

4. **screw up:** to make a mess of

5. **impress upon:** to force something on someone

6. **smart aleck:** someone obnoxiously self-assertive

7. **hold back from:** to keep secrets from someone

8. **Tar Heel:** a nickname for North Carolinians. "Tar Heel" is the name for University of North Carolina athletic teams and students.

9. **take the credit:** to allow people to believe one has done something praiseworthy, whether or not one has actually done it.

Body of Lies

(2008)



family, Ed.

H: I didn't know the man. What are you doing for Bassam's family? He was your guy.

F: So now you don't know him, huh?

H: You'll be going to Amman as acting station chief. You'll **outrank** (2) Holiday. No matter what he says, you're the show-runner. You'll liaise with Jordanian GID, who are as hot for Al-Saleem as we are. You'll be working with a guy named Hani Salaam who is not your **run-of-the-mill** (3) fingernail-puller. Hani is a professional.

F: And will I be sharing information with him?

H: Let me say this about that. No. Now, you wanna take a few weeks off and go bang the wife?

F: I'm getting a divorce, Ed. You know that. You know more about it than I do.

H: Everybody around here **screws up** (4) their marriage, buddy. Why not you? So you'll go to Amman?

F: I will go to Amman. I'll call you later.

Scene 2

(After an unsuccessful mission in

Amman, Hoffman comes and talks with Hani Salaam face to face.)

H: Now, don't say 'No' before I say anything. Just let me say what I've come here to say. Thank you. You have done an incredible job developing this guy Karoobi ... Katoomi ...

Hani Salaam (S): Karami.

H: Karami. Now, we develop these assets to use them as needed. And I have a need.

S: No.

H: I'm just gonna get all frustrated here.

S: Why are you frustrated, Edward?

H: Because we have a partnership. You have something that I need that will help me and you won't allow that to happen. And I'm trying to **impress upon** (5) you a sense of urgency.

S: Urgency does not call for changing methods that work for methods that do not work.

H: Now, who pays the bills around here? I would hate to have to have my president call your king. Because that's just gonna be embarrassing for all of us.

S: In matters of intelligence, Edward, you are speaking to the king.

H: Well, Your Highness, I want con-

trol as a favor to the United States.

S: You can't have it. I could tell you we will run him jointly, but it would not be the truth. Real intelligence operations, they remain secret forever. You Americans, you are incapable of secrecy because you are a democracy. Now, I know my business. I have never failed you, have I?

H: No, you have not. Are you sure you wanna make this the first time?

S: Edward, you're missing the point. Karami, he doesn't know anything. That is not the way the organization operates. I will ask him what he knows when it is time. Now, are you happy?

H: I'm getting there.

Scene 3

(Ferris complains about Hoffman's attitude on the meeting with Salaam.)

F: Well, that was really embarrassing, hmm? You still thinking about pussy, Ed?

H: Don't be a **smart aleck** (6). Think about that Hani, he's bright. But he's also arrogant. That's gonna be his undoing.

F: You're talking about him, right?

H: Just flow with me, buddy.

F: Jesus Christ. You have a recent

photograph of Al-Saleem. Don't you think I could've used intel like that, Ed? What the hell else are you **holding back from** (7) me?

H: What do you wanna know?

F: Well, for one thing, what's his real name?

H: Kareem Al-Shams.

F: His birthplace?

H: Syria. Hama.

F: Background?

H: Well, his loving middle-class family got killed by Hafez Assad so he moved to Saudi Arabia. Studied physics and engineering in Riyadh, then here in Amman. Post-graduate study at the University of North Carolina. He's a **Tar Heel** (8) like you. Now, he prides himself on his humility and not having to **take the credit** (9). Yet this is the same man who will go on videotape with his brothers describing what he's done and what's gonna come.

His is a false humility. It's a false modesty. His ego is more powerful than his beliefs, more dangerous. And that is his weakness. Now, all we got to do, Ferris, is just get that fucker on the phone.

(By Wang Yu)